RAISING AWARENESS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE THROUGH TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

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TRAINING

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The context is Broad Street United Methodist Church, 501 E. Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio, 43215. The problem identified is a lack of awareness of domestic abuse. The hypothesis is that if the ministry leaders participate in a focused study on domestic violence, then they will be equipped to identify members who will benefit from a referral to professionals for treatment. The study incorporated six sessions with qualitative methodologies: reflective journaling, pre- and post-project questionnaires, group discussions, and personal interviews. Training equipped the ministry leaders to respond appropriately to abuse victims.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Luke 4:18-19 reads, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (NRSV). This scripture has resonated with me since I first began to ruminate on the topic of my dissertation. As a survivor of domestic abuse/violence, I longed for the day that I would be set free from the verbal, mental, and physical abuse of my tormentor. This research serves as proof that the church can be a vehicle of safety and provide pastoral care to the victims and children of domestic abuse. Women, men, straight, gay, or transsexual need to hear that from the pulpits across America. There are a few people who helped me tell my story and find a way to offer valuable help.

First, I want to thank the Triune God who led me to this dramatic point in my life that made it possible for me to share my pain and my victory. I vowed to never utter a word about my circumstance, but enrolling in the DMin course of study at United Theological Seminary made it all but impossible to evade this traumatic time in my life because of the use of the Samuel DeWitt Proctor method of allowing the tension in my Spiritual Autobiography to undercover a problem in my context.

I would also like to thank my mentors, Dr. Jonathan McReynolds and Dr. Anita Coleman, for their never-ending belief in me and the work that I could produce during the three years of this DMin program. The entire staff at United was simply superb, from the

financial aid office, the recruitment office, and the constant reassuring nods from Karen Clark.

I want to thank my peer associate, Rev. Carl Thompson, as well as my spiritual sister and my sorority sister, Dr. Gypsie Murdaugh. These spirit-filled and gifted individuals provided me with Godly advice and allowed me to vent from time to time. I am grateful to have had them pushing me on to see what the end would be.

I cannot leave this page without saying thank you to my beloved sisters of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Psi Eta Omega Chapter, who cheered me on from day one.

Thank you to my Professional Associates, Dr. Latrice Washington, Dr. LaTasha Reedus, and Dr. Charlene Watkins, who, upon reading my early chapters, encouraged me to do better. Also, to my Contextual Associate, The Reverend Dr. Lori Reiber, Senior Pastor of Broad Street United Methodist Church, and a graduate of United Theological Seminary. God knew to bring you to Broad Street UMC at the right time to get me over the finish line. Thank you to the Broad Street UMC congregation, who encouraged me every Sunday with words of kindness and offered to help in any way possible. In addition, I would like to thank my editor, Dr. Kenning Cummings, for taking on this project at the eleventh hour, which enabled me to complete the program.

To all of those amazing people and even some whose name escapes my memory, I am truly grateful for every prayer whispered and every praise given. To God be the Glory!

DEDICATION

This doctoral dissertation is first and foremost dedicated to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who never left me nor forsook me during this three-year journey,

I dedicate this body of work to my deceased mother, father, and grandmother, as well as my long-suffering children, Hunter and Christian. My deceased parents and grandmother instilled in me the grit to never give up! My beautiful children listened to me vent, but, after a while, would tell me to “get to typing on that paper.” I love them with every fiber of my being.

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ABBREVIATIONS

LGBTQIA	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Asexual
TED	Technology, Entertainment, Design
UMC	United Methodist Church
WCTU	Woman's Christian Temperance Union

When we have all competed to become wealthy, the preacher reminds us that we have an obligation to feed the hungry and to care for the widows and orphans, that we are only stewards of God's wealth.

—Samuel D Proctor, *The Certain Sound of the Trumpet: Crafting a Sermon of Authority*

INTRODUCTION

This doctoral work and research have been a spiritual transformational journey. I was given the opportunity to take a deep dive into my personal story of domestic abuse and come to the realization that I was a victim, but now I am a survivor, thanks to God. For so long, I kept this part of my life hidden from the saints at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church because I did not want to be seen as less than in the eyes of the congregation. I was, after all, a leader and the Director of Ministry Development. How could I lead the Women's Ministry and have this part of my life being discussed in the open? The tricks of the adversary are many, and Satan had my mind so clouded that I shortchanged my healing just for the sake of having feelings of shame and guilt.

This final project allowed me to move from being silent to being an advocate for other women and men who suffer at the hands of an abuser and who suffer in silence. This topic is very dear to my heart, as on several occasions, I was not certain if I would be alive to see the dawning of a new day. What this doctoral work and research showed me was that the very ministry or group support that was missing at Mt. Olivet is also missing at Broad Street UMC, adding insult to injury, the fact that the previous pastor of Broad Street said that he did not know of any cases of domestic violence in the church. As I mentioned later in this dissertation, two people were invited to be participants in my study, but they had to decline because both were in therapy for domestic violence (victims). If I were to extrapolate the former pastor's thinking onto many mainstream

churches in Columbus, or even in Ohio, one would not find many ministries or support groups to help victims of domestic violence.

This body of research work is a way that I can give to a marginalized community by providing training from competent and licensed social workers and therapists who were able to explain in detail the different types of domestic abuse/violence, and the characteristics of identifying who may be a victim. Additionally, information regarding real-time assistance via resources such as the Ohio Domestic Violence Network, Choices for Victims of Domestic Violence (a temporary housing project), was given, as well as where to obtain legal assistance so victims can seek legal protection through Civil Protection Orders. All the training and access to resources make a difference in saving a person's life. I am grateful that I was permitted to educate the participants at the Broad Street UMC. I fervently hope that this doctoral research does not stop at Broad Street but can be given in other venues. The following chapters are contained within this dissertation.

Chapter one, Ministry Focus, details my spiritual journey, the context of the Broad Street UMC, my development of the Synergy, and how my spiritual journey intersected with my Synergy to place me on the path to wanting to increase awareness of domestic abuse/violence.

Chapter two, Biblical Foundations, draws upon the text taken from 2 Samuel 13:1-22, the Rape of Tamar. The rape scene that is told dispassionately in the Bible is the lynch pin to this project, since helping abuse victims is central to this study. Raising awareness through training will teach leaders and lay leaders to listen to voices like that of Tamar.

Chapter three, Historical Foundations, examines the Underground Railroad and how it enabled enslaved persons to find freedom through a network of safe houses. Safety and freedom are essential for a person to live a successful life. The church is equivalent to the modern-day Underground Railroad, as the Church must also be a safe space for the abused victim to find safety.

Chapter four, Theological Foundations, explores the Social Gospel theology espoused primarily by Rev. Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch. These preachers, and later on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., believed that the Sermon on the Mount was Jesus's way of integrating activism into theology. Today's churches need to pick up the mantle of the Social Gospel theology and start to advocate for the abused victims.

Chapter five, Interdisciplinary Foundations, examines the Social Modeling Theory. Social Modeling is one of the many ways that domestic abusers learn to do what they do. By observing aggressive acts, such as hitting, kicking, screaming, and name-calling over and over again, the witness to these acts tends to do similar aggressive and reprehensible acts to another person. This model is important because just as modeling can teach persons how to inflict harm on a loved one, social modeling can also demonstrate how the love of God can be shown by being kind and not resorting to aggressive acts as a way to solve problems between persons in the household.

Chapter six, Project Analysis, provides an outline of the project, detailing the activities of each weekly session. The methodology and the implementation are reviewed in great depth, as are the ways the data was analyzed to arrive at the conclusion given. Two licensed social workers presented topic-related information in weeks two and four,

which provided the baseline for awareness training on what domestic abuse/violence is and how to look for characteristics of persons who might be abuse victims. This doctoral research sought to educate by increasing awareness of domestic abuse/violence. It is my prayer that this type of awareness training is duplicated in as many places as possible.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The title of this dissertation project is "Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse through Training." The problem statement of the context at Broad Street UMC is that there was no awareness of domestic abuse within the congregation. If a congregation has no awareness of domestic abuse/violence, then how can the congregation offer support to victims of domestic violence? The hypothesis of this research is that if ministry leaders participate in a focused study on domestic violence, they will be equipped to identify members who will benefit from a referral to a professional for treatment.

This topic of domestic abuse is dear to my heart, even though for many years, I ran away from this horrific part of my life. I remember going into a bookstore to find a copy of a book on domestic abuse, and even after reading the forward and the conclusion, I did not internalize the words that my lips were saying out loud. At my previous church, an author asked me if I would contribute words of wisdom to women who had suffered abuses, and I remember looking at the author and saying that I cannot attach my name to any publication like that! What I did not realize was that God would require me to tell my story through the DMin process at United. I marvel at how God, through the infusion of the Holy Spirit, reorders my thinking through spiritual transformation to cause me to lay it all on the line (tell my story) to do ministry for the saints.

The final project allowed me to come full circle, with me telling my story and not being afraid, while igniting a passion within me to help abuse victims. Trying to construct a coherent narrative using the four foundations chapters permitted me to see the big picture and how I am to be used in the Pastoral Care Ministry. The integration and synthesis of the foundations chapters is exactly what God had ordained from the foundation of the world for me to be in the space I am in.

As I led each session during the six-week project, I received healing. I thought after eighteen years, the trauma associated with domestic abuse quietly disappeared. However, what I discovered is that God was using this six-week project to free my emotions and to release my tears to clean my spiritual palate of fear, guilt, and shame. I realize that my voice has power, and that I must use my voice if I am to help amplify the voices of others who sit in silence. Only the Triune God could use this academic setting to heal and release me to the next step in my ministry journey.

For churches that choose to turn a blind eye to the issues of domestic violence, generation after generation will be afflicted with this sin. I am grateful that the pastor of Broad Street UMC was a willing partner to shine the light on this heartbreaking situation. Jesus demanded that love be the first rule of all institutions. Society is currently caught up in an existential wave of cruelty and hate. The church has to raise her voice and take her prominent place in the world by demanding justice and offering grace and mercy. Broad Street UMC is poised to be that voice crying out in the wilderness. Hear ye, them.

Context

In my Contextual Analysis, I wrote that a church that is only serving as a social agency is failing in its mission to make disciples of all men and women. The question I raised after seeing so many alcohol and drug-addicted people, who also suffer from mental health issues, as well as living on the streets in Columbus, Ohio, is how Broad Street UMC can extend its reach to not only care for these people physically but also spiritually? "During the early history of the Church, the people decided that their faith would be expressed by evangelizing to the neighborhood families and offering after-school programs for boys and girls."[1] "Broad Street UMC was created to be a neighborhood church."[2]

The women of the church organized the Ladies Aid Society and a foreign missionary group. They also organized family dinners for members and friends of Broad Street UMC. The progressiveness of Broad Street UMC is one of the reasons why this church continued to grow and meet the needs of the neighborhood. As the neighborhood demographics shifted from resident churchgoers to a more urban population, Broad Street UMC did not relent in its original charge of being a neighborhood church.

Although the intent was to remain a neighborhood church, many of the youth outreach programs faded away, and the homeless and LGBTQIA's needs became the focus of the Twenty-First-Century Broad Street UMC. Even though Columbus is a gay-friendly city, there are still many establishments where gay and transgender homeless people are not welcome. Once again, Broad Street UMC has stepped up to fill that void in

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[1] Nancy Lee, "The First 25 Years 1875-1899," in *Built On a Rock: A History of the Broad Street United Methodist Church, Columbus, Ohio*, ed. Nicki King (Columbus, OH: Kelly Printing, 2000), 20.

[2] Lee, "The First 25 Years," 21.

the downtown Columbus area. I am happy to write that Broad Street UMC, in the immediate context, has found a way to connect its congregation to the people who are not being served in a meaningful way by society by providing a weekly feeding program and a warming center. The church partnered with the Coalition for the Homeless for homeless persons to come in from the winter blast and warm themselves by being provided a "safe space." In this "safe space," the homeless can talk to clergy about any spiritual need that arises and can get pastoral counseling. Clergy provided a sense of camaraderie with this population and provided stability to them in an otherwise unstable environment.

The paid staff and volunteers also fostered a sense of community among this population and were willing to offer any assistance they were able. Such as hired city employees who assisted with finding domiciles for the homeless, and ensured this population knows how to get food stamps, medical care, cell phones, iPads, bus passes, etc. Broad Street UMC has stepped up in providing resources for the homeless, even at the expense of the growing businesses in downtown Columbus, who do not want the homeless sleeping near their establishments or hanging around during the day.

One drawback of this expression of goodwill is that there was no active deterrent to the physical abuse or emotional abuse that afflicted the female population of the homeless. Certainly, when things got too out of hand, the Columbus police were called, but it would take them at least an hour or so to show up at the warming center. So, the clergy and paid staff would have to find creative ways to diffuse these physical skirmishes. Additionally, with the church adopting the posture of being an "affirming"[3]

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[3] An Affirming Congregation is the name given to congregations that intentionally accepts and ministers to person of the LGBTQ community.

congregation, Broad Street UMC reached back to its roots as a politically active church in its stance against saloons.

Not shirking from its responsibility to stand up for what the church believes to be its core values, Broad Street UMC is a spiritual force to be reckoned with. Yet, there is still a missing ingredient in specifically offering a "sacred safe space" for individuals suffering from physical and emotional domestic abuse. As stated above, when physical altercations erupted at the "Warming Center," they were generally between homeless partners who attended the church services. I have witnessed firsthand the verbal taunts and physical altercations amongst the homeless population who are partners. Not knowing what to do or how to help, I left the conflict resolution in the hands of the paid staff. Much of the resolution was to send the perpetrator off church grounds to cool off. One instance that comes to mind involved a young lady who told anyone who was within earshot that her two-week-old boyfriend had allegedly physically and sexually assaulted her. The response from the director at the time was to call the police to file a report on the perpetrator who allegedly committed the crimes. The alleged female victim stated she did not want to call the police for fear that her partner would "kill" her at some point.

The perpetrator could still walk throughout the warming center without anyone asking him to leave the premises. The director told the alleged victim that if she ever decided to press charges, most assuredly, the rape was probably captured on one of the cameras that constantly surveilled the Broad Street Church property. After witnessing this firsthand, I was somewhat perplexed by the offered resolutions. No one went to see if there was a rape of any kind on any of the surveillance tapes, and the alleged perpetrator was allowed to walk freely throughout the portion of the church set aside for this

population. I am not sure if the paid staff workers bothered to tell the clergy at Broad Street UMC. I know for a fact that if domestic abuse victims do not take the next step to report this crime to the police, there is not much anyone can do.

Earlier, I said I knew for a fact, because I was that person. I called the Reynoldsburg Police Department over eight times. Not all calls were because of domestic abuse, but I was afraid to prosecute my then-husband. How would I appear to my fellow Christians, and to my family and friends? Domestic violence to whomever is afflicted should be met with compassion, a sense of justice, and a way forward. At a minimum, there should be a competent lay leader who can offer a listening ear and provide the abused victim with contacts for social agencies and assistance for shelter, should the victim not feel safe returning home. All common-sense offerings can be made within the safe space of the church.

While the "warming center" was a "safe space" for some, the grounds outside and sometimes inside the Broad Street Church were not safe, nor sacred spaces for some individuals who needed food and a warm place to stay. Additionally, even though there were clergy and paid staff persons who made rounds in the warming center, there were no Public Service Announcements that help would be offered for those who suffered or who had suffered violence at the hands of their domestic partners.

Additionally, on Sunday mornings, there was no mention of assistance for domestic abuse victims to the congregants at the Broad Street Church. In speaking with the then-senior and assistant pastors (both have left) about the occurrences of domestic abuse happening within the congregation, I was told no one had ever approached them

about that specific topic. Statistics show that some parishioners are suffering in silence. I know because I was such a person.

Ministry Journey

My Spiritual Autobiography was written with biases and unknown revelations about me and my life. As I read over the words that I put on paper, I realized that certain events happened repeatedly. For example, I saw where I prioritized family relationships and aligned my life actions to make my parents proud. I saw where my upbringing was closely connected to my saintly grandparents and the Christian teachings of my grandmother and grandfather. It was on Saturday evenings that my brother and cousins would spend the night with my mother's parents to have fun and to get ready for Sunday school by going over the lesson by exegeting biblical scriptures to obtain knowledge and understanding.

My grandmother was ever the diligent schoolmaster who made certain our exegesis was coherent. After all, my grandmother had obtained a bachelor's degree in ministry from the Aenon Bible College. She was not allowed to preach since it was not considered fashionable for women to preach in the pulpit. However, she was allowed to teach, since teaching was approved for women in the church.

Grandmother was a barrier-breaker in her own right. She realized she would not be allowed to preach, but that did not stop her from getting her education and learning how to properly divide the word of God. Grandma knew that education was something no one could take from her. Once that knowledge was in you, it was in you. Grandma encouraged all of her granddaughters not to settle for the status quo. She pushed us to

take the road less traveled. I am grateful my grandma gave me an example of a saintly woman who was not ashamed to let God use her at home, on her job as a teacher in the Columbus Public School System, and as a deaconess and teacher at the Love Zion Baptist Church. My grandmother had an anointing from God, as did my mother. As my mother made preparations to cross Jordan, I lay in my mother's bed and asked God to give me the anointing that was on my mother. To this day, I believe my mother's mantle is currently on me.

What jumped out at me in my Spiritual Autobiography is that, in all my teaching and working in church, I always wanted to appear to have it all together. When I started having marital problems, I would tell a few of my close girlfriends, but I would not tell my pastor I needed help. I did not tell the pastor of my former church that I was having difficulties until the physical abuse reared its ugly head. When I finally did go to the pastor's office, I was told not to put my then-husband in "the system." The system is a colloquial term for any local, state, or national network of law enforcement that wants to keep our black menfolk locked up.

My pastor told me, "The system is full of Black men. Let's not add to it." I was told that the assistant pastor would work with my then-husband. Well, let me say that those "counseling sessions" did not last long. Oh, there were a few phone calls, but nothing else. Soon, the counseling calls ceased, and life went back to the way it was. It was not until I joined Mt. Olivet Baptist Church under the superb teaching and preaching of the late Rev. Dr. Charles E. Booth that I got the answer I needed, but not necessarily the consistent help that I needed.

Dr. Booth was very pointed in his resolution— “Leave that man.” I did as he said, and I am living my best life. I raise this story because even though I was able to talk with my pastor, there was not a ministry in the church that could have provided me with a “safe space” to talk about the abuse and to receive counseling from Christian women who had been through similar abusive experiences and had come through their experiences as “more than a conqueror” (Ephesians 8:37, paraphrase).

There was not even a ministry that dealt with the emotional roller coaster of going through a divorce for my two children and me. The good news is that the kids and I did go to a divorce course for eight weeks at a predominantly white church. The eight-week course was very beneficial, and my children enjoyed having a “safe space” to be able to talk about how the divorce affected them.

Sacred Safe Spaces are needed now in all worship places. One would think any “sanctuary” would be a sacred self-space, but that is untrue. Many sacred spaces do not discuss domestic violence at all. The topic is never preached, and parishioners are assumed to know where to get help. From the pulpit come sermons dealing with justice, equality, racism, and even sexism, but not much is preached about domestic violence. Trust me when I say that if domestic violence is not intentionally preached or talked about in the church, church members will not necessarily know that help can be offered to them.

Additionally, if children are a part of the domestic equation, help must be offered to them as well. Who knows what horrors they have witnessed and what thoughts or impressions are lingering in their brain? My only recourse was to either leave the situation or get my husband to leave the house so my children and I could get peace. I did

not know that fifteen years later, the effects of witnessing physical, verbal, and emotional abuse would still affect them.

I must admit that if I had not taken the time to write my Spiritual Autobiography, I would not have been able to identify patterns where God's hand has been on my life, from pretending to preach with my cousins at my grandparents' house on Christmas Holidays to my street corner preaching on Saturday afternoons. Learning proper exegesis at the feet of my grandmother equipped me with the ability to craft spiritually sound Sunday-school lessons.

God's plan for my life started to unfold as I became the Director of the Women's Ministry at Mt. Olivet, and finally, I was responsible for being the caregiver to both my parents at the end of their lives. My acceptance of my "call to the ministry" was something that was meant for me to do, even though I could not and did not comprehend it. I was fine with teaching God's word, but I certainly did not want to commit my life to being a "preacher."

Now that I am enrolled in seminary, I realize that a call to ministry does not always have to mean being a full-time preacher over a congregation. Being in full-time ministry may mean that I devote myself to being a chaplain to those in a hospice ward, or to patients living in senior nursing facilities, or even being a chaplain at a church. I realize that I can serve God's people (those who are churched and unchurched) in a myriad of settings. I do not necessarily need a pulpit to proclaim God's love and acceptance for humankind.

Being a minister can mean fighting for justice, equality, and equity for all who are oppressed by the unjust systems of this society. There are so many spaces where a

minister can do God's work. I believe there should be "sacred safe spaces" where people who have been victimized, brutalized (economically, socially, and spiritually), and maligned can get help!

Develop the Synergy

In writing my Spiritual Autobiography and Contextual Analysis, I realized that my doctoral project was going to deal with domestic abuse, which included physical and emotional abuse, and the lack of visible support in the church. Since I was a zealous worker in my church, I realized that being there was an escape mechanism for my children and me. While working in the church, I understood I did not have to be in a home, being verbally or physically abused by my ex-husband, who was drinking and/or getting high most evenings. I did not relish the thought of having to go home after a good worship experience, because I knew my mood, as well as the moods of my children, would be altered just by walking into that hellhole.

The church, with all my friends and adults, to which my children felt safe and loved, was an absolute sanctuary. By sanctuary, I mean it was a place of respite. No one knew the church building was my getaway. It was as if the church building were a stop on the Underground Railroad. Some friends would invite my kids and me over for dinner, allowing us to hang out. The kids and I found our way along this invisible Underground Railroad to different houses where our friends became our second and third homes on Sundays. I was genuinely grateful for these intense and nurturing friends, but not once did I tell of the abuses that were happening in my home.

We discussed marital discord, but did not discuss the violence that dwelt in my home. My initial thought of the intersection between my Spiritual Autobiography and my

Contextual Analysis led me to want to delve further into sacred safe spaces and the need to be able to discuss openly and honestly about abuse. Since my previous two churches were predominantly African American and very conservative in their theology about marriage being between a man and a woman, and my current context put me in a predominantly White, LGBTQIA-affirming congregation, I realized that in all three places, a sacred safe space was not intentionally created for same-sex or heterosexual couples— married or in a committed relationship. I began to wonder whether, if I were a member of my current context, would I feel comfortable bringing up the topic of domestic violence to the senior pastor? Would I be willing to put myself and my story out in the public for all to scrutinize and examine?

After giving the above much thought, I can state I would be willing to offer any resources I had to make sure people who were willing to participate in such a ministry were graciously looked after and helped. Thus, I realize my doctoral project was born out of my personal story and the desire to help others deal with the shame, guilt, and trauma of being victims of domestic abuse. I remember feeling accomplished after my children and I "graduated" from Divorce Care. In my heart, I wanted to offer the same type of "accomplishment" to victims of domestic violence at Broad Street UMC and others willing to participate in this yet-to-be-seen ministry. I realized that if I wanted to venture out to do this doctoral project at Broad Street UMC, I would have to meet with the pastors to see if this potential project would meet their approval. After meeting for a few minutes before service on Sunday, I timidly articulated my vision for my doctoral project. The then-senior and assistant pastor agreed this would be a project that both could support. After both pastors left the Broad Street UMC, I expressed my desire to use

Broad Street UMC in my final project for my DMin study. The pastor agreed and quickly got on board, and even agreed to serve as my context associate.

Before I go any further with this introduction, I want to make certain all who read this dissertation know what I am writing about when I use the term domestic violence.

Domestic Violence Definition

The definition, as given by the *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology and Counseling*, states that domestic violence is:

> Acts within a family unit that have threatening or violent aspects; that result in injury, whether physical or emotional; that have a lack of consent on the part of the victim; and that is excessive or inappropriate to the situation. At one time, domestic violence referred primarily to physical abuse toward children or the wife. The current definition of domestic violence includes the emotional components and has been extended to any situation in which a family member is harmed. The most common types are violence by parents to children, violence by a husband to a wife, and violence by adult children to elderly parents. Current legal standards require mental health professionals to report any incidence of abuse or violence to the appropriate authorities if it involves children or the elderly.[4]

Since the world in which we live consists of multiple cultures, what might seem like abuse to mainstream Americans may be the norm in other cultures, no matter how cruel it may seem. However, since we are talking about what is defined as domestic abuse within the contiguous forty-eight states, the laws written for each particular state are what should be followed. The physical or sexual assault of any woman, man, or child is an act that is punishable by law. However, awareness of cross-cultural customs is important if one is

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[4] David G. Benner and Peter C. Hill, "Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology & Counseling," in L. N. Ferguson, *Domestic Violence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 363-364.

working with families from such groups. Great caution and sensitivity must be exercised when dealing with domestic abuse cases.

How should the church respond to domestic abuse situations when domestic abuse is currently taking place in the congregation?

> The Christian response to domestic violence arises from the concern for human beings who have experienced sin and need to know the comfort and love of God. For victims, trust has been violated, dignity stepped on, and lives twisted because someone did something that should not have been done. They will carry scars and wounds throughout their life that could affect others with whom they interact. These are people who desire to be whole and healthy but may not be able to do so. Deception, hypocrisy, anger, and exploitation have developed and impacted everyone. Healthy families work together to face life's challenges. Abusive families are unable to do so. The abuser or perpetrator often has been a victim and is now passing on this abuse. Instead of love, there is lust or hate. Instead of caring, there is exploitation. This person is a prisoner of sin and often denies or minimizes the offense. To address all these concerns, we need to understand the causes and effects of domestic violence and then look at interventions.[5]

The person who is the target of the violence is referred to as the victim. The person who acts is the abuser or the perpetrator. The acts themselves are referred to as abuse. These terms help depersonalize the situation and make it easier to identify abuse, but also may make intervention cold and impersonal. A counselor must balance the person and the act to avoid becoming too emotional or too unemotional when working with any part of the system.[6]

Four types of abuse may be clustered under domestic violence. Each has its own dynamic. All four, however, affect a victim, resulting in fear, threat, and violence. The first type is neglect, where the necessities of life, such as food, shelter, or medical attention, are withheld from the victim. Whether a child or an elderly adult, these victims

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[5] Benner and Hill, "Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology & Counseling," 363-364.

[6] Benner and Hill, "Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology & Counseling," 1999.

are usually unable to cope for themselves and rely on the family to provide the basics. The second type is physical abuse. The perpetrator hits, pushes, whips, bites, punches, slaps, or burns the victim, resulting in injuries that are left on the body. Some are visible wounds, such as bruises; others are internal, such as broken bones or hemorrhaging. Children and wives are the most common victims. The third type is sexual abuse. Whenever a person is tricked, trapped, forced, or bribed into a sexual act, this is considered abuse. This is called incest in the family. It may occur toward a spouse or even toward an elderly parent. The fourth type is emotional abuse. It occurs when parents take no interest in their children. Parents are emotionally unavailable to the child or may belittle and yell at the child. This could occur toward the elderly as well.

While the church may not be equipped to provide therapy for the individuals, the church can refer the victim to a reputable domestic violence agency for help and treatment. The definition I will be using for this doctoral project for domestic abuse is "the physical, financial, and emotional trauma received by perpetrators of domestic abuse to the extent that the victims have a sense of shame, guilt, and anxiety when the topic is brought up in any social setting, including the Church."[7]

This doctoral project was too limited in scope to parse out the different types of domestic abuse and how the different types of abuse affect the victim. I want the focus to be on raising awareness through training within the Broad Street UMC that will allow victims to get assistance from the many resources known to the church, so that spiritual and emotional healing can be affected.

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[7] Benner and Hill, "Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology & Counseling," 363-364

Conclusion

The release of tears is necessary to facilitate healing. According to a Harvard Health Publishing article, not all tears are alike, but a category called emotional tears releases oxytocin and endorphins that help humans ease physical and emotional pain.[8] People who suffer abuse at the hands of their loved ones must find a way to deal with the hurt, shame, fear, and loss of dignity that accompany domestic abuse. However, once the crying stops, there must be a plan of action to hold the abuser accountable and allow the abused to get help to move forward and to receive healing. The church is such a place that can be most effective in reaching out to victims of abuse to get the proper assistance needed to move forward and heal. Raising awareness and providing training is a start to being a beacon of light to the hurting. The people sitting in the pews on Sunday morning must understand and know that their pastor and leadership are willing to help with any situations of abuse. Even though the pastor may not have credentials in counseling, the pastor does have a plethora of valuable resources that they can offer to the abused, as well as offer suggestions for help to the abuser. Preaching sermons about this tabooed subject is a way to start the conversation. This project aims to raise awareness through training on domestic violence. By doing so, increasing awareness of this horrific subject will lead the people of the church to want to establish some sort of ministry or group support to abuse victims and to provide a safe and sacred space for victims of abuse, coupled with trained disciples who will be able to give information about resources that will provide appropriate help.

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[8] Harvard Health, "Is Crying Good for You?" Harvard Health Publishing, July 29, 2021 and October 29, 2021, 1-5, https://www.health,harvard.edu/blogis -crying-good-for-you-202107292578.

At the conclusion of this awareness and training, the church began to discuss spiritual abuse and how this can be addressed in its ministry. While this is a situation that must be dealt with openly and honestly, and at a level much higher than just referrals to a domestic abuse counselor, the type of spiritual abuse I am defining is the abuse done to one's spirit as a result of domestic abuse. The victim may think they are not worthy of God's love since this horrific abuse has happened to them. The person may be so engulfed with shame that they cease to attend worship or participate in church activities for fear that someone may find out about what is happening behind closed doors. The feelings of inadequacy or insecurity may overwhelm a victim, and clinical therapy may be necessary to deal with that level of trauma.

Whatever counseling or clinical treatment is needed to get an abused victim to feel good about themselves again, it must be undertaken. I firmly believe the church can be a source of comfort and support. Once the abused person feels strong enough to share their story with others, that empowered person will be able to assist another who is going through domestic abuse. This cycle of victims becoming empowered and reaching back to help others in a similar situation is a powerful ministry model. God's word does not come back void. As conduits through which Jesus uses us to help others, Jesus hears our prayers. We, the members of the *ecclesia*, should be trained to listen attentively and love unconditionally. As the lay leaders and leadership become aware and are trained to help the victims find help in their time of need, they too can sing the song "Changed" by the Hawkins Family. The lyrics are as follows:

> A change, a change has come over me
> He changed my life, and now I'm free.
> He washed away all my sins, and he made me whole
> He washed me white as snow

He changed my life completely, and now I sit at His feet.
To do what must be done
I'll work and work until He comes
A wonderful change has come over me
A wonderful change has come over me.[9]

Spiritual transformation, in the view of a Christian, is the best way a person can overcome the trauma of being abused. While I am all in with collaborating with counselors, therapists, and other supporting agencies, my testimony is that my life was changed, and my soul and spirit were healed because of the transforming grace of Jesus Christ.

[9] Tramaine Hawkins, "Changed," Composer Walter Hawkins, Musix Match, 1994, https://www.google.com/search?sca_esv=184b5e68f8bfca7f&sxsrf=AE3TifN5OlX-XQL0RdPnJU7v4ilfRd N7EQ: 1758734680563&q=tramaine+hawkins+-+changed+lyrics&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwihqI6f9fGPAxXc4MkDHcAGGIIQ1 QJ6BAgzEAE&biw=1376&bih=778&dpr=3.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

"The Books of Samuel present the radical transformation that occurred in the life of ancient Israel when Israel ceased to be a marginal company of tribes and became a centralized state."[1] It focuses on the contrast between Saul's failed leadership and David's leadership and character. "This extraordinary transition caused radical social change and drastic reconfigurations of social power."[2] The flow of the narrative from beginning to end concerns the forceful advance of David from shepherd boy (1 Sm 16:11) to "shepherd king" of Israel (2 Sm 5:2).[3] The Books of Samuel bring to the front three distinct factors at work in Israel's social transformation.[4] One, there is the influence of political power and social pressure of the increased wealth in the new burgeoning cities versus the Israelites who lived in the more rural parts of the country.[5]

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[1] Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel,* Interpretation: A Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1990), 1.

[2] Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 1.

[3] Walter Brueggemann and Tod Linafelt, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*: *The Canon and Christian Imagination*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2020), 167.

[4] Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 1.

[5] Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 1.

Second, the enormous personality that King David embodied hastened the transition. The first fifteen chapters of 1 Samuel prepare for his arrival in 1 Samuel 16. Once David appears on the scene, he commands center stage. The third factor in this transformation is YHWH.[6] This God of Israel plays a central part in transforming the shepherd boy into a king. God is behind the scenes, pulling the lever for David to succeed in many areas, especially in militaristic undertakings.[7] However, there is one area where David's favor seemed to fail, and that is in being an effective father to his children. The story of the rape of Tamar, as recorded in 2 Samuel 13:1-22, describes the horrific and brutal rape of princess Tamar by her half-brother, Amnon, the crown prince. The biblical text tells the story without descriptive language that would depict the barbaric actions inflicted upon the victim by her half-brother.

This story in the biblical text directly speaks to this doctoral project. This project is "Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse Through Training." This thesis is Elevating the Standards of Broad Street UMC to Serve as a Sacred Safe Space for Victims of Domestic Abuse. This thesis fits with the story of the rape of Tamar pericope in that the sexual and domestic violence exhibited within this family is not a new issue, yet the care and healing given to the victims have not been universally accepted nor universally administered. In fact, it is precisely the lack of care and the lack of a safe space where Tamar could have spoken her truth about the horrific rape that makes this tragedy still relevant today.

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[6] Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, 1.

[7] Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel,* 2.

The lack of respect and adequate treatment (mind, body, and spirit) given to Princess Tamar is sadly similar to that of victims within today's churches, synagogues, temples, and other places of worship. Victims are not given the safe space to simply "tell their story" without the shame and guilt accompanying such savagery. Just as it was then and is now, social and political customs are greatly to blame. Patriarchy, with all of its power dynamics intertwined, tends to mute the voices of the oppressed.

This chapter will discuss the need for safe spaces for victims of domestic abuse. The healing of their souls demands that they voice their trauma and receive care and love from sisters and brothers in Christ. The belief is that healing may occur when those in leadership and lay positions are able to discern abuse victims and are able to provide a listening ear and proffer resources that will allow the victims to heal mentally and spiritually. If the church is not seen as a sacred safe haven, then the church is failing to provide Godly assistance in times of trouble and immediate danger.

This chapter looks at the story's principal actors and how each played a part in devaluing the personhood and silencing the voice of Princess Tamar. Unfortunately, this still happens in today's society. The church must be at the forefront of a healing ministry since the victims are members of the body of Christ. Our mandate to love each other demands nothing less. Social agencies can never do the job of "feeding the sheep."

This Biblical Foundations chapter will discuss more directly the heinous behavior of rape as detailed in the gut-wrenching narrative of Tamar and Amnon. Also discussed will be the historical and cultural settings, literary analysis, and an analysis of the form and movement of the text. Finally, an exegetical analysis of 2 Samuel 13:1-22 will be presented.

Historical Setting

> First and Second Samuel, taken as one canonical entry, constitute the third element of the Former Prophets, sandwiched between Judges and Kings. Situated in this place, the scroll provides an account of the transition that Israel remembers making from a tribal society (beleaguered by anarchy and barbarism in Judges 17– 21) to a monarchial society (characterized by a bureaucratic self-aggrandizement in 1 Kings 1– 11).[8]
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> The entire period of 1 and 2 Samuel consists of about 150 years. 'The canonical division of 1 and II Samuel is appropriately marked by the death of Saul.'[9] This entire literature traces the rise of David to the monarchy. 'The narrative of David's ascendancy to the throne begins in 2 Samuel 2:1-4 unscathed by the several murders that have occurred on his behalf, and he is made king in Israel by covenantal agreement (5:1-5).'[10] In the Books of Samuel, the rise of David is YHWH's will, even if he has to survive the rough-and-tumble of politics.[11]

The first book details Samuel's life and Godly appointment as a prophet and judge. Even though Samuel possessed wisdom and strong leadership abilities, as he aged, Samuel began to fade into the background, and the Hebrew people intensified their pursuit of YHWH to give them a King "like all the other nations" (1 Samuel 8:5, 20).[12] YHWH tells Samuel to anoint Saul, and the genesis of the monarchy is instituted.

The authorship of the Books of Samuel is widely attributed to Samuel, although there are many theologians who are not in agreement.[13] Brueggeman writes, "It is a

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[8] Brueggemann and Linafelt, *An Introduction to the Old Testament,* 131.

[9] Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel,* 210.

[10] Brueggemann and Linafelt, *An Introduction to the Old Testament,* 170.

[11] Brueggemann and Linafelt, *An Introduction to the Old Testament,* 170.

[12] Brueggemann and Linafelt, *An Introduction to the Old Testament,* 170.

[13] Brueggemann and Linafelt, *An Introduction to the Old Testament,* 170.

widely held view that the Books of Samuel are, in the final form of the text, a compilation of several independent sources that have been arranged to generate a certain perspective on the Davidic transition from tribal society to the modest beginnings of monarchy."[14] After 1 Samuel 25:2, Samuel dies, so it is still being determined who penned the words for the remainder of 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel.[15]

Cultural Context

The cultural context of 1 and 2 Samuel was perhaps one of patriarchy, where there was male leadership at the head of government, the King, male leadership in the home, and male leadership within the military hierarchy. Carol Meyers writes, "The term 'patriarchy' denotes the social-science concept of male dominance. This concept was formulated by nineteenth-century anthropologists using classical literature, especially legal texts, in their attempts to understand the history of the family."[16]

This term was soon used by biblical scholars who were interested in the Israelite family makeup. However, Meyers writes,

> A number of feminist archaeologists do not agree that this term should be applied to the Hebrew family, as this term does not exist in the Hebrew Bible.[17] Myers writes that the term patriarchy is to be understood as a social science theory rather than a biblical construct. However, Meyers writes that Roland DeVaux, a Biblical scholar who penned the book 'Ancient Israel,' published in English in 1961, and as a classic reprint in 1997, asserted that 'the Israelite family is patriarchal,' and the men were masters of their wives and had absolute authority over their children, even had the power of life and death.'[18]

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[14] Brueggemann and Linafelt, *An Introduction to the Old Testament,* 169.

[15] Brueggemann and Linafelt, *An Introduction to the Old Testament,* 170.

[16] Meyers, "Was Ancient Israel a Patriarchal Society?" 8.

[17] Meyers, "Was Ancient Israel a Patriarchal Society?" 8.

[18] Meyers, "Was Ancient Israel a Patriarchal Society?" 12.

> Likewise, Raphael Patal, in a 1960 book, subscribed to the idea of patriarchy as the father ruling the family. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (1976) refers to the patriarchal family as 'which was ruled by the authority of the father.' The 1974 volume of the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* refers to the 'almost unlimited authority' of the father in Israelite families.[19]

Pervasive throughout Hebrew society (even in ultra-Orthodox clans), women were relegated to a secondary status. Gender roles in the Bible are articulated from an oppressive, discriminatory, and dominated perspective. As evidenced through various narratives in the Torah and the New Testament, women were the property of their fathers, brothers, and husbands. A woman's life was relegated to the proverbial cooking, cleaning, rearing of the children, and running the household, which may or may not contain servants or slaves. A woman's worth was determined by whether she could deliver male children to her husband, since females were not allowed to inherit land or money when their father died. The exception to this case, of course, was the reversal of a ruling for the five daughters of Zelophedad.[20]

This horrific story is not even considered a stand-alone cautionary tale; it is seen as a "prelude to further enhance the complicated situation between Absalom and Amnon regarding the succession of David's throne."[21] Brueggemann states, "chapters thirteen through nineteen concern principally Absalom."[22] Within the larger unit, chapters thirteen through fourteen are commonly reckoned as a separate episode, ostensibly

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[19] Meyers, "Was Ancient Israel a Patriarchal Society?" 13.

[20] Numbers 27:2.

[21] Arnold A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, World Biblical Commentary, Vol. 11 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1989), 216.

[22] Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel,* 286

having Amnon and Tamar as the lead characters; even at the beginning (3:11) and at the end (14-44) of those chapters, however, it is Absalom to whom attention is given.[23]

Literary Style

Within the historical setting of the early period of the Kingdom of Israel, the literary style used is the historical narrative.[24] In particular, "Second Samuel 9–20, (plus 1 Kings 1–2 as a presumed addendum and conclusion), has been much studied and much appreciated in scholarship under the rubric, "Succession Narrative."[25] Leonhard Rost first gave that name to the narrative in suggesting that the question of a successor to David, posed in 1 Kings 1:27 is the overriding question this extended narrative seeks to answer.[26] Thus, in the course of the narrative, David's sons Amnon (2 Samuel 13), Absalom (2 Samuel 14–19), and Adonijah (1 Kings 1:41–53; 2:13–25) are eliminated as Solomon becomes David's ultimate successor (1 Kings 1:32–40).[27] It is to be noted that Rost's proposal of the theme of "succession" as the clue to the narrative is often doubted by scholars; the nomenclature of Succession Narrative, however, continues to be used in critical discussion."[28] "Both Gerhard von Rad and Martin Noth followed Rost's position. For them, the Throne Succession Narrative formed one of the earliest historical writings

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[23] Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel,* 286.

[24] Hans J. L. Jensen, "Desire, Rivalry, and Collective Violence in the Succession Narrative," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 17, no. 55 (1992): 42, https://doi.org/10.1177/03090892920 1705504.

[25] Jensen, "Desire, Rivalry, and Collective Violence in the Succession Narrative," 42.

[26] Jensen, "Desire, Rivalry, and Collective Violence in the Succession Narrative" 42.

[27] Jensen, "Desire, Rivalry, and Collective Violence in the Succession Narrative" 42.

[28] Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament,* 139.

in the world and became the precursor of the Deuteronomistic History in its use of the retribution principles or the chain of cause and effect."[29]

Textual Critical Analysis

> There can be no dispute as to the work and necessity of textual criticism. The ultimate aim of all biblical study is the interpretation of the biblical text. The first requisite for this work is to have the biblical text in its original purity.[30] In the 3000 years since the Old Testament was written, there is a high probability that the Hebrew scriptures are not entirely free from corruption.[31] Unfortunately, errors and redactions are contained in the text, and 'the Masoretic notes are the first beginnings of Old Testament textual criticism.' The corrections were made to the Hebrew text because the Masorites were convinced that the traditional consonant text did not reproduce the original words from the writers.[32]

There are no original manuscripts to compare translations. Many academic scholars have looked at the Masoretic Text, Qumran scrolls, Septuagint, Peshitta, and other translations to try to decide which text is most like the original text critically. This decision is even more complex because the transcribers made several editing errors– leaving out letters, text sections because of uncertainty, and words at the beginning or the end of a line, before the final form was presented. Additionally, spelling, word order, and synonyms may have affected the transmission quality based on the different coding in the ancient manuscripts.

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[29] Daniel Bodi, "The Story of Samuel, Saul, and David," in *Ancient Israel's History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and Richard S. Hess (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2014), 202.

[30] George H. Schode, "Old Testament Textual Criticism," *The Old Testament Student* 7, no. 2 (1887): 44, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3156784.

[31] Schode, "Old Testament Textual Criticism," 45.

[32] Schode, "Old Testament Textual Criticism," 45.

The Literary Design

The material in 1 Samuel 1:1 –1 Kings 2:46 is primarily arranged in a chronologically linear order.[33] Since this assignment looks specifically at the pericope of 2 Samuel 13:1-22, we will only provide a chiasmus analysis for that specific text.

Chiasmus is a literary device that repeats words, grammatical constructions, or concepts in reverse order. It comes from a Greek word meaning 'crossing' or X-shaped. Ancient stories often contained chiasms to help illustrate the meaning of a passage. 2 Samuel 13 is a narrative with the chiasmus structure. '2 Samuel 13 shows a narrative that begins with love (vv. 1-2) and ends with hatred (vv. 21-22), centers on an act of violence that turns lust into hatred (vv. 14b-15a).'[34] The three names, Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom, form an inclusio between the first and last verse of this chapter.[35] 'The beginning and end are linked by way of a reversal: Amnon loves at v.1, he is hated at v. 22.'[36]

The chiasmus looks like the following:[37]

A. Amnon is in love with Tamar (1-2)
  B. Jonadab's counsel (3-5)
    C. Tamar's arrival (6-9a)
      D. Amnon's servants ordered them to leave (9b)
        E. Amnon's command to Tamar to come to bed with him, Tamar's unavailing plea (10-14 a)
          X. AMNON's RAPE OF TAMAR (14b-15a)
        E1. Amnon's command to Tamar to depart; her unavailing plea (15b-16)
      D1. Amnon's servant recalled (17)
    C1. Tamar's departure (18-19)
  B1. Intervention of Absalom (20)
A1. Absalom's hatred for Amnon (21-22)[38]

The chiasmus of 2 Samuel 13:1-22 shows clearly what events took place and who the principal players were. One gets a sense of the overall action that will take place in the

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[33] William Ramey, "The Literary Design of 1 Samuel 1 – 1 Kings 2," 2013, https:www.inthebeg inning.org.

[34] Ramey, "The Literary Design," 20.

[35] Ramey, "The Literary Design," 20.

[36] Ramey, "The Literary Design," 20.

[37] Ramey, "The Literary Design," 20.

[38] Ramey, "The Literary Design," 21.

narrative. This literary device is an excellent way to perform a close reading of an incredibly complex text.

Exegesis

Exegesis refers to the critical interpretation and explanation of a text, especially a religious text. It involves examining the text's language, historical context, and cultural background to understand its meaning and significance better. What follows is an exegesis of the following pericope.

2 Samuel 13:1-22, Amnon and Tamar (NRSVA)

[1]Some time passed. David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar, and David's son Amnon fell in love with her. [2]Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin. It seemed impossible for Amnon to do anything to her. [3]But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah, and Jonadab was a very crafty man. [4]He said to him, 'O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me?' Amnon said to him, 'I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.' [5]Jonadab said to him, 'Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill, and when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat and prepare the food in my sight, so that I may see it and eat it from her hand.' [6] So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill, and when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, so that I may eat from her hand.'

[7]Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, 'Go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him.' [8] So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, where he was lying down. She took dough, kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. [9]Then she took the pan and set them before him, but he refused to eat. Amnon said, 'Send out everyone from me.' So everyone went out from him. [10]Then Amnon said to Tamar, 'Bring the food into the chamber so that I may eat from your hand.' So Tamar took the cakes she had made and brought them into the chamber to Amnon, her brother.

[15]Then Amnon was seized with a very great loathing for her; indeed, his loathing was even greater than the lust he had felt for her. Amnon said to her, 'Get out!' [16]But she said to him, 'No, my brother, for this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you did to me.' But he would not listen to her. [17]He

called the young man who served him and said, ‘Put this woman out of my presence and bolt the door after her.’ [18](Now she was wearing an ornamented robe with sleeves, for this is how the king’s virgin daughters were clothed in earlier times.) So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. [19]But Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she was wearing; she put her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.

[20]Her brother Absalom said to her, ‘Has Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother; do not take this to heart.’ So Tamar remained a desolate woman in her brother Absalom’s house. [21]When King David heard of all these things, he became very angry, but he would not punish his son Amnon because he loved him, for he was his firstborn. [22]But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad, for Absalom hated Amnon because he had raped his sister Tamar.

Overview of 2 Samuel 13:1-22

This gut-wrenching narrative depicting the rape of Tamar is a link in the tragic chain of sin begun in Chapter 11 as King David’s firstborn son and heir-apparent committed an incestuous rape. This grotesque act parallels King David’s rape of Bathsheba in that both committed immoral acts against beautiful women. Bathsheba and Tamar were described as beautiful in the sacred text. As King David had a wise counselor in Nathan who was able to point out the King’s string of immoral actions regarding the deception and murder of Uriah, the Hittite, Bathsheba’s husband and a loyal general in the royal army, as well as the sin of trying to cover up David’s evil, Amnon did not have a wise counselor to help navigate him through his temporary feelings of love.

As Jonadab provides Amnon with a crafty story of how to lure Amnon’s half-sister to his room, Amnon commits the rape, shames Tamar, and kicks her out of his house. Tamar has to walk the walk of shame to her brother Absalom’s house for cover. King David hears about this but does not punish Amnon, nor does he comfort Tamar. Absalom takes it upon himself to seek revenge for his sister’s rape. What happens next in

this pericope and in the remaining narratives of 2 Samuel is that tragedy for this royal dynasty results when sin is not dealt with swiftly and effectively.

2 Samuel 13:1-22

(Verse 1) Some time passed. This exegesis begins by parsing the first sentence of the text. This first sentence refers to the prophecy Nathan gave to David that calamity would rise against David from within his household as a consequence of David seducing and raping Bathsheba and killing Uriah. The second part of the prophecy is that the sword would never depart from the kingdom.[39] Yet, here, the prophecy of Nathan is coming to fruition as princess Tamar is overpowered by her brother, and her virginity, dignity, and voice are stolen, much like Bathsheba's dignity and voice by the King.

> Verses 1b – 2: David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar, and David's son Amnon fell in love with her. [2]Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin. It seemed impossible for Amnon to do anything to her.

At the outset of this narrative, it is noted that Tamar is linked with Absalom and not Amnon as a sister. Absalom and Tamar were the children of David through his wife Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, King of Geshur.[40] Amnon, who was Tamar's half-brother since Amnon's mother was different from Tamar's and Absalom's mother. Since Tamar and Amnon were half-brother and sister, it is no wonder that Amnon was tormented and knew he could not touch Tamar since she was a virgin and was a close relation. The fact that Amnon fell in love with her and made himself sick because of it is somewhat disconcerting based on the reasons above. Additionally, it is not told how long

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[39] 2 Samuel 12:9-11.

[40] 2 Samuel 3:3.

Amnon held these affections for his half-sister, but the narrative says that he has not found a way to satisfy his passion.

> Verses 3-6: [3]But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah, and Jonadab was a very crafty man. [4]He said to him, 'O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me?' Amnon said to him, 'I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.' [5]Jonadab said to him, 'Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill, and when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat and prepare the food in my sight, so that I may see it and eat it from her hand.' [6] So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill, and when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, so that I may eat from her hand.'

A new character is introduced in the person of Jonadab, who is Amnon's cousin. The text states that Jonadab was "crafty" or wise in some other translations. The word "crafty" used to describe Jonadab is also used to describe the serpent in Genesis 3:1.[41] Jonadab, like the serpent, was deceitful, cunning, and manipulative as he provided Amnon with a "solution" to his sickness. Although Jonadab did not tell Amnon to "force your way on her," their wickedness was shared.[42] His influence contributed to the rape of Princess Tamar. Jonadab's deceitfulness also fools King David into placing Tamar in harm's way.

> Verses 7-10: [7]Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, 'Go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him.' [8]So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, where he was lying down. She took dough, kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. [9] Then she took the pan and set them before him, but he refused to eat. Amnon said, 'Send out everyone from me.' So everyone went out from him. [10]Then Amnon said to Tamar, 'Bring the food into the chamber so that I may eat from your hand.' So Tamar took the cakes she had made and brought them into the chamber to Amnon, her brother.

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[41] David Guzik, "Enduring Word Bible Commentary: 2 Samuel Chapter 13," *The Enduring Word Bible Commentary*, December 29, 2015, https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/2-samuel-13/.

[42] Guzik, "Enduring Word Bible Commentary: 2 Samuel Chapter 13."

In this instance, King David delivers his daughter to his son, Amnon, on a silver platter. Jonadab's "crafty" resolution worked for Amnon to get precisely what he wanted. Some commentators write that since David commanded Tamar to go to Amnon's bedside to prepare food for him, he was partly responsible for the rape of Tamar. Tamar is an obedient daughter and helpful sister by making the cakes to feed Amnon. Tamar offered "life-giving sustenance to Amnon through her laborious efforts."[43] What is not known are Tamar's thoughts after she hears Amnon tell all of the servants to leave the room and hears and obeys Amnon to come to his bedside to feed him the cakes. Being a virgin, Tamar would not know how to "read the room" of a seduction about to take place. Mark Gray illuminates that as Tamar bakes, Amnon is brought to a "boiling seething point of lustful frenzy . . . supine on his bed, in a state of growing sexual arousal at the sight of his sister's movements and all the while in his febrile imagination . . . she would knead more than the dough."[44]

> Verses 11-14: [11]But when she brought them near him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, 'Come, lie with me, my sister.'[12] She answered him, 'No, my brother, do not force me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do anything so vile! [13] As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the scoundrels in Israel. Now, therefore, I beg you, speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.' [14] But he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her.

This is the first time we hear from Tamar in this narrative. Of all the women who have been forcefully assaulted sexually, Tamar's voice in saying "No" to Amnon is an exclamation that Amnon did not expect. Even as Amnon "overpowers" her, princess

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[43] Deidre Brouer, "Tamar's Voice of Wisdom and Outrage in 2 Samuel 13," *Priscilla Papers* 28, no. 4 (Autumn 2014), https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/tamars-voice-wisdom-and-outrage-2-samuel-13/.

[44] Mark Gray, "Amnon: A Chip of the Old Block? Rhetorical Strategy in 2 Samuel 13 7-15: The Rape of Tamar and the Humiliation of the Poor," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 77 (1998): 40.

Tamar is wise enough to counter Amnon's brute strength with intellectualism and the knowledge of the Torah. Tamar tries to reason with Amnon by suggesting he does not want to do this "vile" thing, especially not to his sister! According to Deuteronomy 22:28-29, the sexual abuse of a virgin woman must be taken seriously.

> If a man meets a virgin who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are discovered, the man who lay with her shall give fifty shekels of silver to the young woman's father, and she shall become his wife. Because he violated her, he shall not be permitted to divorce her as long as he lives.[45]

Tamar tries to reason with her brother by saying, "You would be as one of the scoundrels of Israel," most notably someone who would be reviled in all Israel. She also says, "The King will not withhold me from you," as she desperately tries to escape from the death-grip clutches of a man focused on raping his victim.[46] Leviticus 18:11 states, "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, born in your father's house, since she is your sister." Regardless of Tamar's nuanced and sophisticated reasoning techniques that she used to escape the viciousness and violence that came directly at her, Amnon would hear none of it! Tamar's voice is not heard despite emphatically saying, "No"!

> Verses 15-19: 15 Then Amnon was seized with a very great loathing for her;
> indeed, his loathing was even greater than his lust for her. Amnon said to her,
> 'Get out!' 16But she said to him, 'No, my brother, for this wrong in sending me
> away is greater than the other that you did to me.' But he would not listen to her.
> 17 He called the young man who served him and said, 'Put this woman out of my
> presence and bolt the door after her.' 18 (Now she was wearing an ornamented robe
> with sleeves, for this is how the king's virgin daughters were clothed in earlier
> times). So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. 19 But Tamar put
> ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she was wearing; she put her hand
> on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.

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[45] Deuteronomy 22:28-29, NRSV.

[46] Frank M. Yamada, *Configuration of Rape in the Hebrew Bible*: *A Literary Analysis of the Three Rape Narratives* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2008), 114.

It is evident that Amnon never "loved" his half-sister Tamar. His craven lust for Tamar only exceeds his overwhelming guilt over his sin. Since Tamar is a reminder of his contemptible and criminal behavior, Amnon wants to put Tamar far away. Thus, without blinking an eye, he banishes his victim of sexual assault from his sight and presence. It is heartbreaking to observe that Tamar deserves better than what was done to her as a princess. As Tamar once again tries to reason with Amnon to tell him why he should not kick her out after the rape, Deidre Brouer likens "Tamar's voice to that of wisdom in Proverbs 8:1, 'Does not wisdom call and understanding raise her voice?" In Proverbs 8:6-7, wisdom says, "Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right, for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips." Tamar's wise words to Amnon go unheeded and unheard. [47]

As Tamar is thrown out of Amnon's room, she cries and does not hide the truth that a horrendous crime has been perpetrated against her. She puts ashes on her head and tears the long, richly ornamented robe she wore to Amnon's room. Tamar's wailing demonstrates publicly that she has been violated.[48] She went away sobbing aloud. This is the second time Tamar gives voice to her suffering condition and refuses to be silent. Tamar did not give place to the voice of shame. "She is the only woman who voices resistance to a sexual violation and so continues to present a powerful example of protest for women today."[49]

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[47] Deidre Brouer, "Tamar's Voice of Wisdom and Outrage in 2 Samuel 13," 223.

[48] Rachel Adelman, "Tamar 2," *Jewish Women's Archive* (June 23, 2021): 4, https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/tamar-2.

[49] Adelman, "Tamar 2," 4.

Verses 20-22: [20] Her brother Absalom said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother; do not take this to heart." So Tamar remained a desolate woman in her brother Absalom's house. [21] When King David heard of all these things, he became very angry, but he would not punish his son Amnon because he loved him, for he was his firstborn. [22] But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad, for Absalom hated Amnon because he had raped his sister Tamar. Princess Tamar finds comfort and solace in her brother Absalom's house. Absalom quickly deduces that it is Amnon who has violated his sister. Absalom also silences Tamar's voice by telling her to be quiet and not to "take this thing to heart." Absalom becomes Tamar's protector for many reasons. One such reason is that Absalom's desire is not sexual, like his brother Amnon. Another reason is that Absalom's desire is kingship and power, but he has to get rid of his half-brother, who is an obstacle.[50] Absalom's actions imitate King David's actions. King David got rid of Uriah to satisfy his desire for Bathsheba. Absalom will have to kill Amnon in order to become heir apparent.

It is difficult to witness the reaction of King David regarding the rape of his daughter because the writer does not tell whether David met with his son, Amnon. The biblical text states that King David was angry but did not punish Amnon "because he loved him." What type of love does not chastise another when correction is needed? YAHWEH declares in 2 Samuel 7:14:[14:] "I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings."[51] King David's failure to punish his son leads to

[50] Jensen, "Desire, Rivalry, and Collective Violence," 46.

[51] 2 Samuel 7:14, NRSVA.

another tragedy in the king's life. Amnon's lust and desire will lead to rivalry and violence.[52]

Synthesis

This biblical story is rarely preached on Sunday morning because it is hard to listen to. The scenes depict a horrible and violent scene in which rape occurs. Parishioners come to the House of God to feel good and to leave with their heads lifted up. What can be life-affirming in preaching this narrative? By not preaching this text or one similar to this, abused women, men, and children will continue to feel as if they are invisible. Many do not know that they can go to the pastor or to a member of the leadership team to tell of their abuse. Just as Tamar was silenced by Absalom, the victims of abuse are being silenced by their churches, temples, mosques, etc., because there is simply no one to whom they can tell their story.

When pastors give voice and preach sermons like the Tamar text, the victims come to see that they do not have to suffer in silence. They realize that their pastor and leadership are open to hearing their pain, and the abused victims are emboldened to give voice to their pain. By the abused victim being able to give voice to their pain to someone who is compassionate and caring, they will not think of themselves as being unworthy or unlovable. In due time, the shame and guilt of holding the accounts of abuse will give way to feelings of a renewed life and to feelings of hope. It is by raising awareness

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[52] Jensen, "Desire, Rivalry, and Collective Violence," 45.

through education that people can let go of the secret. “A church that offers safe space is a place of grace.”[53]

Thus, the narrative of the story of the rape of Tamar speaks to my thesis, Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse Through Training. Once this doctoral project is implemented, Broad Street UMC will be able to be a safe space for those who have or are experiencing domestic abuse. Raising awareness through training will be step one in the process of starting a ministry that will be able to offer help to anyone who walks through the doors of the church. The congregation as a whole will be elevated to do another ministry, and Broad Street UMC will be known as the church on the corner of Broad and Washington Streets in Columbus, Ohio, that has an ear to hear and hearts to love within a sacred safe space.

[53] Lynn Japinga, *Preaching the Women of the Old Testament: Who They Were and Why They Matter* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2017), 135.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Historian David W. Blight wrote, "slavery affected everything about society, its social relationships, laws, customs, and politics."[1] Because of the reprehensible nature of the slave owners, the way to escape the horrible conditions of slavery was through the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was a historical network of secret stations established throughout the United States during the early to mid-nineteenth century. Many of these railroads were maintained by Quakers and free blacks in Delaware and Pennsylvania.[2] Its primary objective was to help enslaved African Americans escape from slaveholding states into free states or Canada, where they could enjoy freedom.

It is worth noting that the Underground Railroad was not an actual railroad that ran on railway tracks. Instead, it was a complex and clandestine system of people, safe houses, and churches that helped enslaved individuals reach freedom in the North, and even as far as Canada. In the North, "the anti-slavery press publicized stories about the

[1] Nikole Hannah-Jones and The New York Times, *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* (New York, NY: One World, 2021), 18.

[2] James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 2001), 85.

heroic flights of fugitives who outwitted the bloodhounds and followed the North Star to freedom."[3] To ensure the safety of freedom seekers and their helpers, the Underground Railroad had to be kept secret. Code words were used to provide extra protection against slave catchers and those who opposed their activities. The labyrinth of houses, churches, businesses, boats, railroads, barns, canals, and tunnels provided those enslaved individuals brave enough to "follow the North Star" to find safety, albeit with the reliance on the kindness of white and black strangers. It should be mentioned that Larry Gara, a revisionist of the Underground Railroad, said, "Much of the material relating to it belongs in the realm of folklore rather than history. Gara asserted that the Underground Railroad was not a well-organized transportation system offering multitudes of slaves safe passage to the Promised Land of freedom."[4]

In today's polite society, slavery is a term that is not in fashion. Presently, in the state of Florida, any references to slavery or enslaved people are whitewashed in the curriculum of elementary and middle school kids so as not to offend white children with such brutal language. Even with this sort of revisionist history taking place currently, the horrific realities of cruelty and degradation of chattel slavery remain unchanged. Witness the narrative of Margaret Garner, as told by Levi Coffin, who was a slave mother who killed her child rather than see the child taken back to slavery.[5] The case of Margaret Garner garnered a lot of sympathy and attention as the public came to be made aware of

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[3] McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War*, 84.

[4] John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels On The Plantation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), xiv.

[5] Christine Rudisel and Bob Blaisdell, *Slave Narratives of the Underground Railroad* (Garden City, NY: Dover, 2014), 59.

the circumstances.[6] Margaret Garner was one of seventeen enslaved people who decided to escape from their masters.

> It was in the latter part of January, 1856, and the Ohio River was frozen. There was much snow on the ground. A huge sled, pulled by two horses, was used to escape. Since the party was quite large, and the party reached their destination of Covington, Kentucky, where they were to rest before getting further instructions to get to the Underground Railroad, the leaders agreed to divide the party so that attention would not be drawn to a large group of black people. Margaret Garner, her husband, and four children, and the other three runaways made their way to the house of a man named Kite. Kite fed breakfast to the party of nine and left to get further instructions on how to deliver these runaways to freedom. However, upon Kite's return, he saw the officers, with the masters of the fugitives, and a posse trying to arrest the runaway party. Margaret, the fugitive slave mother, upon sensing her party of runaway slaves was not going to make it to Canada, grabbed a butcher knife from the table and 'with one stroke cut the throat of her little daughter, whom she probably loved the best.'[7] She then attempted to take the lives of other children. She tried to kill herself but was overpowered by the Deputy Marshall and taken to jail.[8] This act of filicide was heartbreaking. Still, it served as an expansive, harrowing tale of what lengths an enslaved mother would go to not return to chattel slavery.[9]
>
> This case seemed to stir every heart that was alive to the emotions of humanity. The interest manifested by all classes was not so much for the legal principles involved as for the mute instincts that mold every human heart — the undying love of freedom that is planted in every breast resolve to die rather than submit to a life of degradation and bondage.[10]

The enslaved people of the southern states would most certainly risk their own lives to escape this cruel bondage. With the building of the underground railroad from state to state through a nexus of underground tunnels, waterways, houses, churches, and other

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[6] Rudisel and Blaisdell, *Slave Narratives,* 59.

[7] Rudisel and Blaisdell, *Slave Narratives,* 61.

[8] Rudisel and Blaisdell, *Slave Narratives,* 60.

[9] Rudisel and Blaisdell, *Slave Narratives,* 60-61.

[10] Rudisel and Blaisdell, *Slave Narratives,* 63.

structures, many enslaved people were able to escape to the North — or freedom.[11] This promised-land was made possible by free Negroes and Black and White abolitionists. Philadelphia served as a busy hub, with the Quakers being more inclined to risk their own lives for the freedom of the enslaved people. Canada was also home to over 30,000 runaways. Black Canadians were heavily invested in helping runaways settle into welcoming communities.[12]

This Historical Foundations chapter will discuss critical figures and places unequivocally committed to seeing slaves become free. This chapter also serves as a backdrop for providing a sound foundation for establishing safe and sacred spaces in the church for victims of domestic abuse, including physical, emotional, and spiritual trauma. Just as the enslaved people required the safe spaces that the Underground Railroad provided, so do victims of domestic abuse, who need safe and sacred spaces to heal and recover.

The Underground Railroad existed because individuals were willing to risk their lives and the lives of their families to help rescue runaway slaves. There were plenty of risks to be shared.[13] The enslaved person who risked their life to leave the plantation knew if they got caught, a severe and blistering beating would be the punishment, if not death. The conductor of the railroad also risked their life for aiding and abetting a runaway slave. Additionally, the persons who provided havens of rest for the runaway

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[11] Natasha Henry Dixon, "Underground Railroad," updated March 3, 2023, Andrew McIntosh, *The Canadian Encyclopedia,* February 7, 2006.

[12] Dixon, "Underground Railroad," 2001.

[13] Judith Bentley, *"Dear Friend" Thomas Garrett & William Still: Collaborators on the Underground Railroad* (New York, NY: Cobblehill Books, 1997), 21.

slaves were fined and even physically beaten severely. Thomas Garrett was assessed $5,400.00 for his part in helping runaways.[14]

These persons were known as "station masters" who operated the safe houses. The station managers took fugitives into their homes and gave them meals, clean clothing, and a safe place to rest. The station managers also provided them with money that would get them to their next transfer point.[15] If the harbingers of enslaved people were wealthy, then the court would fine them an egregious amount of money, so many had to go bankrupt for their act of civil disobedience.[16] This notion of being an abolitionist was not something to be taken lightly or without reservation. Abolitionists faced significant challenges, including social backlash and legal obstacles.[17] "History books are replete with the names of heroic men and women who made outstanding contributions by helping runaway slaves along the Underground Railroad, but for the most part the work was done by plain and simple people from many walks of life"[18] There is a certainty that these ordinary people feared for their lives, but nonetheless, they did this against the backdrop of their own bidding of their consciences.[19] However, there was another group of people who risked their lives to help; these people were the conductors of the Underground Railroad.

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[14] Bentley, *"Dear Friend,"* 21.

[15] Dixon, "Underground Railroad," March 3, 2001.

[16] James A. McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad: The Life and Letters of Thomas Garrett* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2005), 62-64.

[17] McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad,* 62-64.

[18] McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad*, 12.

[19] McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad*, 12.

The conductors of the Underground Railroad were persons who risked limbs and lives to make sure that many of the runaway slaves made it to the "promised land" or freedom.[20] These conductors held the lives of the runaway slaves in their hands. One wrong move or one misstep could mean brutal flogging or death. The conductors were individuals who had a nexus of individuals and families in the South and the North, who were willing to stow away enslaved people for a portion of time until the enslaved people could make it safely to the next safe house.[21]

The conductors risked their lives over and over again as they had to go back into enemy territory to ferry more enslaved people to the North. With the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the conductors and the enslaved people faced even greater peril because slave bounty hunters were patrolling the northern states, and it seemed like no black man, woman, or child was genuinely free.[22] Many legally freed Black men and women were kidnapped from the North and taken back to the South to be sold again.[23] Moreover, if an enslaved man or woman found their way to the North, the Northerners were legally bound to send the Black man or woman back to the owner. This troubling law hastened the abolitionists to preach their gospel fervently and, in doing so, rallied many people to make the moral decision that owning persons as property was abhorrent.[24]

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[20] Bentley, *"Dear Friend,"* 36-46.

[21] McGowan, *Station Master on the Underground Railroad*, 98-114.

[22] McPherson*, Ordeal by Fire*, 84-85.

[23] McPherson*, Ordeal by Fire*, 86.

[24] McGowan, S*tation Master*, 69.

While history is replete with stories of Harriet Tubman, the Moses of her people, leading hundreds of enslaved people to freedom, another name not widely known is that of Levi Coffin.

Levi Coffin

Levi Coffin was reputed to be the President of the Underground Railroad. Levi was born in Guilford County, North Carolina, on October 28, 1798, and died.

September 16, 1877. Levi served as an abolitionist, businessman, temperance leader, educator, and philanthropist during his lifetime.[25]

His devotion to God moved him to devote his life to caring for the enslaved and freed Black people wherever and whenever he encountered them. His book, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin, the Reputed President of the Underground Railroad; Being a Brief History of the Labors of a Lifetime in Behalf of the Slave, with the Stories of Numerous Fugitives, Who Gained Their Freedom Through His Instrumentality, and Many Other Incidents*, provides ample examples of his willingness to do God's will as he saw it. After leaving North Carolina and moving to Newport, Indiana, with his wife, Levi and his wife were seeking a more hospitable environment for their anti-slavery beliefs.[26]

By this time, most of Levi's family - mother, father, and brother – had moved to Indiana. Levi details in his autobiography, "Both his parents and grandparents were opposed to slavery, and neither of the families ever owned slaves; and all friends of the

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[25] Levi Coffin*, Reminiscences of Levi Coffin 1876: The Reputed President of the Underground Railroad; Being a Brief History of the Labors of a Lifetime in Behalf of the Slave, with the Stories of Numerous Fugitives, Who Gained Their Freedom Through His Instrumentality, and Many Other Incidents* (Calumet, IL: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 380-381.

[26] Coffin*, Reminiscences of Levi Coffin 1876,* 58.

oppressed, so I claim that I inherited my anti-slavery principles."[27] Levi recounts his conversion to abolitionism from an account when he was about seven years old. This incident was so horrible that it made a deep and lasting impression. He recalls seeing a gang of freed black men who had been kidnapped or decoyed into going to Virginia and Maryland, where they were transported to Alabama, Louisiana, or Georgia to be sold. These gangs of kidnapped men were handcuffed together and made to follow on foot, behind the horses on which a man with a long whip would forcefully walk the kidnapped men to the place where they would be transported to the southern states. The man on the horse would strike the handcuffed men with the whip when they grew weary of walking. That influenced my whole afterlife. Levi said that as he witnessed this flogging, he asked his father why these men were being treated so viciously.

Levi's father explained to him what slavery was, and "that scene was the first awakening of that sympathy with the oppressed, which together with a strong hatred of oppression and injustice in every form, were the motives that influenced my whole after-life."[28] Levi's home in Newport, Indiana, was a safe space, or a haven of rest, for many fugitive slaves on their journey northward. Levi and his wife, Catherine, believed in the core values that their Quaker religion taught them. Although not a concept realized during the nineteenth century, the Quakers' belief in social justice was unparalleled. The Coffins also used much of their income to advance advocacy by promoting education for enslaved persons. They worked tirelessly after the Civil War by supporting formerly enslaved people in establishing new lives.

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[27] Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin 1876,* 13.

[28] Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin 1876,* 13.

In 1888, Levi served as a delegate to the Republican National Convention, advocating for freedmen and women. As to their devotion to the abolitionist movement, the Coffins had so much traffic in and around their house that their home was known as the "Grand Central Station." In addition to his Underground Railroad duties, Levi and his wife engaged in many business ventures that only used products made by free black persons. Many of Levi's pro-slavery customers left him for a time, and his sales were diminished.[29] New customers helped to pay for the underground railroad expenses, which were costing Levi a healthy amount.[30]

Thomas Garrett and William Still

Many other collaborators on the Underground Railroad advanced the cause of freedom for thousands of enslaved people. Two such people were Thomas Garrett, a white Quaker who lived in the slave state of Delaware, and a free Black, William Still, of Philadelphia. These two men forged a friendship by combining their moral consciences to help enslaved people live free lives. Thomas Garrett was the chief operator of the Underground Railroad's eastern line and passed fugitives through the last few dangerous miles across the Mason-Dixon line.[31]

"On June 1, 1818, Thomas Garrett joined the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race. This was the first American organization

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[29] Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin 1876,* 60.

[30] Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin 1876,* 61.

[31] Bentley, *Dear Friend,* 4.

devoted to the abolition of negro slavery."[32] William Still, for his part, was welcoming fugitives on the other side to the North. Still was a member of the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee, helping the now-freed black men and women resettle in the North or continue to Canada. The white community provided money to aid the fugitives, and it was Still's job to give it out.[33] Still was the perfect person for this position as he had direct contact with escaping slaves. As such, he still kept a comprehensive ledger of all enslaved persons who interacted with him and received money.

It should be noted that for many of the white conductors, there seemed to be a Damascus road experience — the experience the Apostle Paul had on his way to Tarsus, who had a spiritual revelation that shaped their consciousness to believe that slavery was wrong, evil, and that it was their divine mission to free the enslaved persons.[34] Levi Coffin, Thomas Garrett, and others had this epiphany surrounding their emancipation work. Thomas Garrett's "Damascus Road" conversion occurred in 1813 at the Garrett family farm in Pennsylvania.

The story is told that Thomas came home one day to find his mother and the free servants in tears because one of the female free housekeepers had been kidnapped by fugitive slave catchers. Thomas tried to catch up with the kidnappers to rescue the free colored woman from being sold into slavery, and in this moment, Thomas reported,

> Light shone above and shone upon his Soul revealing to his awakened conscience, the utter enormity of slavery as he had never before seen it. It was borne in upon

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[32] Bentley, *Dear Friend,* 35.

[33] Bentley, *Dear Friend,* 7.

[34] James A. McGowan, *A Station Master on the Underground Railroad: The Life and Letters of Thomas Garrett* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2005), 32.

> his mind so vividly as to appall him, and he seemed to feel a voice within telling him that his work in life must be to help and defend this persecuted race.[35]

Thomas Garrett was able to bring home the free family worker and returned rejoicing. This should be a separate sentence from the block quote.[36]

William Still sent thirty-three letters to Thomas Garrett concerning the arrangements for escaping slaves. The first letter to Garrett was concerning Harriet Tubman and her party of seven.[37] Another correspondence that William Still received was a letter from Thomas Garrett to Still, as follows:

> Wilmington, 10th Mo. 31st, 1857
>
> ESTEEMED FRIEND WILLIAM STILL: I write to inform thee that we have either 17 or 27, I am not confident which of that large Gang of God's poor, and I hope they are safe. The man who has them in charge informed me there were 27 safe and one boy lost last night, about 14 years of age, without shoes; we have felt some anxiety about him, for fear he may be taken up and betray the rest. I have since been informed there are but 17, so I cannot tell which is correct. I have several looking out for the lad; they will be kept from Phila for the present. My principal object in writing thee at this time is to inform thee of what one of our constables told me this morning; he of the colored people was a traitor, that he had been written to by an Abolitionist in Baltimore, to keep a lookout for those slaves that left Cambridge this night week, told him they would be likely to pass through Wilmington on 6th day or 7th day night, and the colored man in Phila. Had written to the master of part of them telling him the above, and the master arrived here yesterday in consequence of the information and told one of our constables the above; the man told the name of the Baltimore writer, which he had forgotten, but declined to tell the name of the colored man in Phila. I hope you will be able to find out who he is, and should I be able to learn the name of the Baltimore friend, I will put him on his Guard, respecting his Phila. Correspondents. As ever thy friend of Humanity, without regard to color.[38]

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[35] McGowan, *A Station Master on the Underground Railroad,* 32.

[36] McGowan, *A Station Master on the Underground Railroad,* 32.

[37] McGowan, *A Station Master on the Underground Railroad,* 138.

[38] McGowan, *A Station Master on the Underground Railroad,* 146.

The Quakers

Before I submit another word about the conductors of the Underground Railroad, I would be remiss if I did not insert a statement or two about the Quakers who knew without a shadow of a doubt that slavery was evil and did not sit idly by while thousands of Black and Brown persons were sold into servitude across the United States. Many Quakers inherited a strong antipathy to slavery. George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, "early perceived the spiritual danger inherent in the master-slave relationship, writes Thomas E. Drake in Quakers and Slavery in America."[39] "In 1688, a group of Quakers in Germantown, Pennsylvania, was the first in America to argue that there was an inconsistency between Quakerism and slavery. In his book, Thomas Drake said, "They hated the sight of slavery in a land where they had come to find freedom."[40] The Quakers in Germantown drew up a formal remonstrance against slavery and the slave trade and submitted it to the monthly meeting of Friends in nearby Dublin. They remembered the fear that had gripped them on their voyage across the sea when they thought they might be captured by Turkish pirates and sold into slavery. "Was it not worse, they asked, for Christians to act like the Turks, and steal negroes from their native Africa to keep them in lifelong bondage?"[41] They reasoned that there could be no reason to enslave White or Black men.

Additionally, they reasoned they had come to Pennsylvania to find liberty of conscience, and as such, freedom of the body should prevail.[42] In 1693, the Christian

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[39] McGowan, *A Station Master on the Underground Railroad,* 31.

[40] McGowan, *A Station Master on the Underground Railroad,* 31.

[41] McGowan, *A Station Master on the Underground Railroad*, 31.

[42] McGowan, *A Station Master on the Underground Railroad,* 32.

Quaker's first anti-slavery tract was printed — "An Exhortation to Friends Concerning Buying or Keeping of Negroes." These Christian Quakers maintained that Quakers ought to assist runaway slaves to escape, for God has commanded his people not to restore an escaped enslaved person to bondage.[43]

As the country was becoming more polarized concerning the question of slavery within the southern and northern states, Oberlin, Ohio, was a hotbed of abolitionist activity in the nineteenth century. If a runaway slave were so lucky as to be transported to this town, then a new society of freedom was available to him/her. This town was a welcome place because abolitionists founded the town.[44] This town in Ohio served as a sort of experiment for the rest of the nation — whether or not the slave states really had any interest. This town was a microcosm of a truly free town, where free Blacks could come and go as they pleased and were given the liberty to pursue happiness as it was laid out in the Preamble of the Constitution. This was also a town where freedom-seeking slaves could find help to become free. Within Oberlin, Ohio, stood Oberlin College, which desegregated higher education and prepared a cadre of African Americans for political and educational leadership in American society.[45]

The college and the town were closely linked in their commitment to abolitionism and the Underground Railroad. Oberlin was the first college to have a policy of not discriminating against African Americans — race-blind admissions, if you will,

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[43] McGowan, *A Station Master on the Underground Railroad*, 32.

[44] "Oberlin-Wellington Rescue 158th Anniversary," Campus News, last modified September 13, 2016, https://www.oberlin.edu/news/oberlin-wellington-rescue-158th-anniversary.

[45] Gary J. Kornblith and Carol Lasser, *Elusive Utopia: The Struggle for Racial Equality in Oberlin, Ohio* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2018), 3.

beginning in 1835. It was also the first college to grant a degree to an African American woman: Mary Jane Patterson, OC 1862.[46]

John Jay Shipherd

The history of Oberlin began with John Jay Shipherd, a religious visionary and Oberlin's founding father.[47] Shipherd was born in 1802 to a well-to-do, slaveholding family in upstate New York. From an early age, Shipherd wanted to preach, and in 1830, he verbalized, "It now seems the finger of Providence points westward even to Mississippi's vast valley, which is fast filling up with bones which are dry, very dry," he explained to his parents.[48] "The Lord of the harvest says. 'Whom shall I send, who will go for us?' The heart of your unworthy son responds: 'Here am I sending me.'"[49] In 1830, John, his wife, Esther, and young children departed for Ohio's Western Reserve. On their journey, they heard Charles Finney, the founder of the "Second Great Awakening" in Rochester, New York.[50] Shipherd and his wife finally settled in Cleveland, Ohio, and got his first pastorate at the First Presbyterian Church in nearby Elyria, a village of roughly seven hundred people.[51]

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[46] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 180-181.

[47] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 10.

[48] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia*, 10.

[49] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 10.

[50] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 10.

[51] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 10.

This first job as a pastor was short-lived as Shipherd was fired from his first pastorate because he held a revival against alcoholism, but the men who worked in this frontier setting did not believe that drinking alcohol was a sin.[52] John was terminated from the First Presbyterian Church.[53] "From this difficulty emerged a plan for Shipherd to found a small, intentional community dedicated to the glorification of God and the Christian conversion of humankind."[54] He and his friend, Philo Stewart, joined efforts to form a religious colony much like one found by Pastor John Frederic Oberlin, who worked among the rural inhabitants of Ban de la Roche — a remote region of Alsace, France.[55] Shipherd and Stewart wanted the colony to be named after Pastor Oberlin and selected education as the focus for this new settlement.[56]

They hoped to have an institution that would afford the best education for their Ministry. The new colony had several restrictions for families who wanted to live on this frontier. The people were to be pious and not given to excess in food, and alcohol and smoking were prohibited unless each was medicinal. The dress of the inhabitant was to be modest.[57]

"On August 19, 1834, Oberlinians gathered to form 'The congregational Church of Christ at Oberlin,' in September, they adopted 'Articles of Faith & Covenant' to bind

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[52] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 11.

[53] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia*, 11.

[54] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia*, 11.

[55] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 11.

[56] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 11.

[57] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 13.

all church members."[58] This document encapsulated the evangelical, egalitarian dimensions of the Second Great Awakening. "The Oberlin Colony petitioned the state legislature for incorporation as a 'Town and Village,' but this bill failed in the House of Representatives, and it would take another twenty or so years before Oberlin would be incorporated as a 'Town."[59]

Within the Oberlin Covenant, colonists pledged to "hold in possession no more property that we believe we can profitably manage for God as his faithful stewards."[60] In other words, no family could purchase significant land for private wealth. This statute ensured the egalitarian aspect of the Oberlin experiment.[61] Another integral piece of the Oberlin experiment was the launching of an educational system — the Oberlin Institute. They were a resource that brought many students from Massachusetts, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, and Louisiana to the Oberlin community.[62] At this juncture, the Institute became an experiment for racial integration based on the then-radical idea that people of color were equal to whites in natural ability and human rights.[63]

While Shipherd was unashamedly committed to the racial integration of the Oberlin Institute, not everyone was.[64] As Shipherd was out on a recruiting mission for the

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[58] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 16.

[59] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 17.

[60] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 17.

[61] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 18.

[62] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 19.

[63] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 22.

[64] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia*, 22.

Institute, he secured money for the school from wealthy Cincinnatians, whose sons were kicked out of Lane Seminary for staging a protest against the school's policy for non-admittance of free Blacks. The wealthy benefactors also wanted assurances that Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* Charles Finney would be hired as the professor of theology at the Oberlin Institute. Finney would only accept the position if the school opened its doors to Blacks and Whites. As Shipherd agreed to the terms specified, he was only acting as one voice of the Board of Trustees. Still, he had to secure the passage of the conditions for the thousands of dollars that would come to the Institute and the academic and preaching prowess of Charles Finney. Much to Shipherd's surprise, many of the followers reacted with dismay and alarm.[65]

"A general panic & despair seized the Officers, Students & Colonists," Nathan P. Fletcher later recalled. "P.P. Stewart... at once proclaimed Brother Shipherd Mad!"[66] "Despondency brooded with Sable distrust over almost every Soul because the Christian patrons made it a condition in their donations that Colored people should stand equal in the privileges of the Institution — many students said that they would leave, & Brother Stewart said he would not stay."[67]

Two petitions were circulated concerning whether or not the Institute should allow the admittance of black men.[68] One petition was for the students at the Institute, and the students and the colonists circulated the other. However, the ruling of the Board of

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[65] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 22.

[66] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia*, 23.

[67] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 23.

[68] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia*, 23.

Trustees was to reject the provision to admit students irrespective of color.[69] The Board decided to vote again once they had more evidence of the policies of other schools, similar schools in the land. After much back and forth with the Board of Trustees, a 5-4 margin voted, "That the question in respect to the admission of Students into the Seminary be in all cases left to the Faculty and to them be committed also to the internal management of its concerns."[70]

Thus, the Trustees feared Oberlin would become too closely identified with the Blacks.[71] Once Finney and his associates moved to Oberlin to usher in a new period of the Anti-Slavery movement, the "abolitionizing" of Oberlin was well underway. A week before the inaugural ceremony of Finney, Mahon, and Morgan on July 1, 1835, a large gathering of students, faculty, and townspeople founded the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society.[72]

Although this was the beginning of the Utopia that John Shipherd had envisioned, it would take approximately fifteen to twenty years for his idea and ideals to be realized.[73] As the citizens of Oberlin were fighting for the rights of Blacks, i.e., the right to vote and to have the same rights as the white citizens, there were no Blacks in that area. It would take the next few decades to get Blacks to move to the area — some came from the

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[69] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia*, 25-26.

[70] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 27.

[71] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 27.

[72] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 29.

[73] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 31.

Underground Railroad and settled in Ohio, opting not to go to Canada. Other free Blacks came from other states seeking a better life.[74]

In 1860, twenty percent of the citizens of Oberlin were Black. History is replete with Oberlin's staunchness against slavery and even aided in the escape of a kidnapped Black man and his family in defiance of the fugitive slave law. No fugitive in Oberlin was ever returned to bondage. Oberlin had evolved into a town where free Blacks lived openly, supported by a vibrant African American community and the Oberlin Institute, later renamed Oberlin College.

Oberlin was fortunate to have persons who believed so strongly in the Anti-Slavery movement that the "Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society adopted as their own, nearly verbatim, the constitution drafted by Theodore Dwight Weld for the Anti-Slavery Society at Lane Seminary."[75] This document was a revolutionary and progressive writ that called for an "immediate end of slavery, and also the repudiation of color prejudice and the attainment of racial equality in the United States."[76]

The vast majority of White people in Oberlin believed that the "emancipation of the slave from the oppression of the masters, and the emancipation of the free Colored man from the oppression of public sentiment, and the elevation of both to an intellectual, moral, and political equality with the Whites."[77] What was the driving force behind the beliefs of the White population of Oberlin was that they would put their lives on the line

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[74] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 33.

[75] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 29.

[76] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 29.

[77] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 29.

for the safe haven and emancipation of freed and enslaved black folk. The townsfolk of Oberlin certainly believed that slavery "destroyed family relations and, as a system of oppression, slavery encouraged baneful behavior by everyone caught up in its web of iniquity."[78]

Conclusion

Oberlin in the 1860s was a place that tried to embody the concept of a "more perfect union"[79] by endeavoring to create a town where fairness and equity were the norm. This still-forming utopia was the place where enslaved Africans made their way to live, since freedom would be assured, as well as the right to live and raise families without the threat of physical mistreatment. When one is seeking safety from abuse, mistreatment, emotional mistreatment, or seeking safety in a war-torn nation, or seeking safety in a war-torn neighborhood, the need for safety and feeling safe is essential. Abraham Maslow discusses this in his hierarchy of needs.

In a 1943 paper titled "A Theory of Human Motivation," Abraham Maslow stated that there are five core needs that form the basis for human behavioral motivation. The five needs are:

> 1. Physiological need (food and water, rest, clothing, and shelter; 2. Safety needs (protection from violence, emotional stability, well-being); 3. Love and belonging need (bonding with biological family and chosen family) 4. Esteem needs (confidence for personal growth); 5. Self-actualization needs (fulfillment of one's full potential as a person.[80]

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[78] Kornblith and Lasser, *Elusive Utopia,* 29.

[79] The United States Courts, "The U.S. Constitution: Preamble," https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/educational-resources/about-educational-outreach/activity-resources/us.

[80] Abraham Maslow, "A Guide to the 5 Levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs," 2021, Masterclass.com/articles/a-guide-to-the5-levels-of-maslow-heirarchy-of-neds.

In the case of victims of abuse, the need for a safe space aligns with Maslow's second category of needs — that of safety, emphasizing the importance of security, stability, and protection. Without a safe space, people are limited in building relationships and progressing toward fulfilling personal goals. The need for a safe space was paramount for enslaved people running away from the plantations — their very lives depended on securing a safe space for them to live without being subject to the harsh and cruel treatment at the hands of their masters.

Women and men who are abused require a safe space so that they can obtain help, tend to their wounded spirits, souls, and psyches, and try to live a life redeemed. Children who are abused require a safe space where they can grow and mature into adults who can contribute greatly to society. As Christians, this should be part of our moral makeup, as the Bible reassures us that God cares for us and only wants the best for us. Apostle Paul says,

> As many of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female: for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.[81]

Safe spaces are to be the norm and not the one-off. Churches should be ready to lend a listening ear and provide trauma resources and spiritual coaching to those who come to our doors and cry for help. There are too many resources in the mental health field for the pastor and leadership to turn a blind eye to the victims of domestic violence. All who are blood-washed and are committed to doing the will of God should be willing to do what we can to help this population so that they can know the peace, stability, and

[81] Galatians 3:27-29, NRSV.

safety of a safe space. This doctoral project will increase awareness through training of the leaders and laypersons so that they can offer Godly assistance to abuse victims who walk through the doors of Broad Street UMC and offer a sacred, safe space for them.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

"Apart from the organized church, the religious spirit is a factor of incalculable power in the making of history. In the idealistic spirits that lead, and in the masses that follow, the religious spirit always intensifies thought, enlarges hope, unfetters daring, evokes the willingness to sacrifice, and gives coherence in the fight."[1] In light of this backdrop, the Social Gospel Theology of the Twenty-First Century was developed. Walter Rauschenbusch wrote that, "men of the highest type of God-consciousness made their fundamental experience of God and received their prophetic mission."[2] "Rauschenbusch wrote that the social gospel creates a type of religious experience corresponding closely to the prophetic type It fuses the Christian spirit and the social consciousness in a new outreaching toward God in remarkable experiences of his comfort and inspiring power."[3] "The social gospel has already restored the doctrine of the Kingdom of God, which held first place with Jesus."[4]

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[1] Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis in the 21st Century* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), xx.

[2] Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (Mansfield, CT: Martino Publishing, 2011), 20.

[3] Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel,* 20.

[4] Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 21.

The forces of industrialization and urbanization created conditions that contributed to the church's recognition and awareness of social concern.[5] Most of the conservative evangelical church structures repudiated the undergirding of this theology. The fundamentalist church thought the Social Gospel Movement erased the teaching of personal sin to the detriment of personal salvation.[6]

The conservative right-leaning church promoted the Social Gospel Theology as a kind of socialism. When an individual's rights are set aside for the rights of the common good, then the governance of finances, political doctrines, cultural influences, education, and the distribution of wealth, society will take over the liberties of the individuals. Thus, socialism will be allowed to flourish.[7] Additionally, "the conservative reaction against liberal theology, especially as embodied in the fundamentalist movement, which became a well-defined and potent force in American religion early in the twentieth century, was often also a reaction against the social preoccupation of the liberal churches."[8] The fact that the Social Gospel Movement was closely aligned with Liberal Theology set off an adverse reaction from the fundamentalists.[9] "Theological liberalism and the Social Gospel shared so completely a common ideology that it is often difficult in reading

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[5] Jacob H. Dorn, *Washington Gladden: Prophet of the Social Gospel* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1967), 185.

[6] Dorn, *Washington Gladden*, 183.

[7] Dorn, Washington Gladden, 183.

[8] Dorn, *Washington Gladden,* 183.

[9] Dorn, *Washington Gladden,* 183.

Gladden's sermons and books to decide whether his ideas belong more properly to theology or social theory."[10]

The Social Gospel Theology broadened the liberal church's view of God's relationship to human society and the applicability of Christ's message. Washington Gladded believed the petition, "Thy Kingdom Come," is "the most comprehensive clause in the Lord's Prayer, excluding nothing from the sphere of divine influence."[11] Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God as the crown jewel of the Gospel.

The kingdom of God was a community where everyone would be loved, cared for, and protected. Gladden believed that "if mankind would put itself under the benign sway of the King of love, government, education, the arts, philanthropy, industry, and commerce would be transformed by the law of love."[12] Walter Rauschenbusch wrote, "The social gospel is the old message of salvation but enlarged and intensified."[13]

Differences of Thought in the Social Gospel Movement

Although these two men forged the way for the Social Gospel Movement, they did so from different lenses of Christianity. Walter Rauschenbusch did not believe that "Jesus was a social reformer of the modern type."[14]

> Sociology and political economy were just as far outside of his range of thought as organic chemistry or the geography of America. He saw the evil in the life of men and their sufferings, but he approached these facts purely from the moral, and not from the economic or historical point of view. He wanted men to live a

[10] Dorn, *Washington Gladden,* 185.

[11] Dorn, *Washington Gladden*, 190.

[12] Dorn, *Washington Gladden,* 190.

[13] Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 5.

[14] Rauschenbusch, *Christianity And the Social Crisis*, 41.

> right life in common, and only insofar as the social questions are moral questions did he deal with them as they confronted him.[15]

Walter Rauschenbusch's social movement had a great impact in that it helped to spark a great awakening in our country.[16]

> Walter Rauschenbusch sounded the alarm to awaken the church to its social responsibility. This could be seen in the rise of the New Deal under Franklin Roosevelt's tenure of presidency, the strengthening of the labor movement, the expansion of women's rights, the sowing of the seed for the civil rights movement, and the various expressions of liberation theology.[17]

The Social Gospel Theology is the underlying foundation in resolving the problem of making Broad Street United Methodist Church a sacred, safe haven for domestic abuse and intimate partner abuse victims. If the leadership and lay leaders of the Broad Street UMC undergo awareness and education training for domestic abuse victims, then the church would be able to assist any individual who walks through the doors of the church seeking help, shelter, love, justice, and other critically needed resources. When the church is able to marshal all of her talents, money, and Godly influence to demand political, social, and educational reforms for the least of these, change will happen.

James A. Forbes, Jr. wrote an essay titled, "Sounding the Trumpet Today: Changing Lives and Redeeming the Soul of Society in the twenty-first century," as a response to Walter Rauschenbusch's "Christianity and the Social Crises in the twenty-first century. He asserts:

> The validity of religion itself is called into question if the social dimension of faith is diminished. Claims to have a relationship with God are discredited if such encounters do not lead believers to work for the upgrading of the quality of life in the human community. How we treat one another is the most telling witness to

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[15] Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, 41.

[16] Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, 278.

[17] Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, 278.

> either genuine or hypocritical faith. Individuals may find inspiration and encouragement from spiritual experiences, but the true test of spiritual maturity is whether one is led to neighborliness, compassion, justice, and respect for others. Walter Rauschenbusch took upon himself the challenge of calling the Church to its mission of upholding the prophetic tradition as an essential aspect of conscientious Christianity. . . No view of Jesus could be complete that did not acknowledge his call to prayer and fruitful actions to transform human society into the kingdom of God by regenerating all human relations and reconstituting them in accordance with the will of God.[18]

"The gospel mandate for the Church to be 'in' but not of the world requires that it cultivate the art of challenging the very systems that regulate property, financial investments, neighborhood design, taxes, wages, political policies, and the distribution of wealth, educational opportunities, and work."[19] Forbes writes that even "100 years later, a refresher course in the prophetic justice impulses of the Social Gospel is urgently needed."[20] Forbes also writes that "No view of Jesus could be complete that did not acknowledge his call to prayer and fruitful actions to 'transform' human society into the kingdom of God by regenerating all human relations and reconstituting them in accordance with the will of God.[21] The Social Gospel theology works most effectively when the spirit of the living God provides the impetus and power to not only transform the lives of the individuals but also understand the social forces and systems that are causing the myriad of social ills and sanctify those systems.[22]

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[18] James A. Forbes, Jr., "Sounding the Trumpet Today: Changing Lives and Redeeming the Soul of Society in the 21st Century," in *Christianity and the Social Crisis In the 21st Century: The Classic That Woke Up the Church.* ed. Paul Rauschenbusch (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2007), 275.

[19] Forbes, "Sounding the Trumpet Today," 276.

[20] Forbes, "Sounding the Trumpet Today," 276.

[21] Forbes, "Sounding the Trumpet Today," 275.

[22] Forbes, "Sounding the Trumpet Today," 278.

Diverse Voices in the Social Gospel Movement

The study of the Social Gospel Movement would be incomplete if we did not mention that the Social Gospel Movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries lacked the acknowledgment and hearing of diverse voices. Today, the United States is religiously pluralistic and far more varied in terms of an expanding pantheon of religious actors. During the growth of the Social Gospel Theology Movement, the principal actors were male Protestant clergy members who exerted significant influence on American Society.[23]

While men were given accolades and notoriety in ushering in this new experiment of the Social Gospel Movement, countless women worked to realize the kingdom of God, inspired by the social gospel. Christopher H. Evans, in his foreword to "Gender and the Social Gospel," writes, "Although numerous studies have enhanced and expanded our understanding of the movement, the social gospel's legacy is still too frequently seen primarily through the writings of a small cadre of white middle-class Protestant leaders."[24] "Whether emerging from the churches of Protestant and Catholic America or African American urban faith communities, women from diverse cultural and ethnic contexts felt a special call to realize the social hope found in Jesus' teachings."[25] Women must be inserted or re-inserted in the narrative of the Social Gospel Movement. Without the scholarship and research of women during this movement, the retelling of history,

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[23] David Mislin, *Washington Gladden's Church: The Minister Who Made Modern American Protestantism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), vii.

[24] Christopher H. Evans, "Foreword," *Gender and the Social Gospel,* ed. Wendy J. Deichmann Edwards and Carolyn De Swarte Gifford (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003), xi.

[25] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, xi.

definitions, descriptions, and interpretations is, at best, incomplete and, at worst, inaccurate.[26]

Wendy Deichmann Edwards writes, "Women and men accepted the challenge of attempting to build a just society in the face of horrific urban, industrial, and labor conditions. In various ways, they proclaimed a Christ-centered gospel that was both personally and socially transformational."[27] "Recent scholarship suggests that women presumed responsibility for social conditions that affected women, children, and family life. Men maintained oversight of industrial, political, and theological concerns."[28] Women during this late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century movement were more likely to champion and advocate social purity issues, including the promotion of sex education, opposition to the double sexual standard for men and women, preventing prostitution, and, of course, most temperance movements.[29] The women were more likely to argue for women's suffrage and the right to preach using the Social Gospel Theology.[30] Advocacy for human rights for descendants of African heritage was not a hot-burning issue for mainline Protestant women. "Many African Americans worked diligently to address racial justice issues, an area often neglected entirely by Euro-American men and women."[31]

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[26] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, 2.

[27] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, 4.

[28] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, 4.

[29] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, 5.

[30] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, 5.

[31] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender, and the Social Gospel,* 5.

It is necessary to note that the women who took up the mantle to incorporate the message of the Social Gospel Theology, Euro-American or African American, still had to work within the male and female gender confines. Women were still considered "helpers" because they cared for the family and raised the children. There was a stringent line of demarcation for men's and women's decorum in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Victorian gender ideology was in vogue during the heyday of the Social Gospel Movement.[32]

Frances Willard and the Social Gospel

Carolyn De Swarte Gifford, in her essay titled "The Woman's Cause is Man's," attempts to rescue Willard from historical oblivion because of her leadership in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Many historians have considered Willard, a social gospel leader in the movement's formative years. Willard's tenure as president of the WCTU from 1879 to her death in 1898 shows evidence of being motivated by vision, goals, and strategies, as some of the men we identify as social gospel figures — chiefly Walter Rauschenbusch.[33]

Willard shared a similar social and religious background and values to the social reformers who grew up in mid-century rural and small-town environments. She grew up in a New England Puritan environment tempered by evangelical Protestantism – Methodism. "She spent much of her childhood and adolescence on a farm in southeastern Wisconsin."[34] Her activist spirit was shaped when she moved to Chicago and plunged

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[32] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel,* 4.

[33] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, 21-22.

into an urban environment, concerned by the growing problems in the city. Willard, using the language of liberal theology, envisioned the Kingdom of God on earth with human institutions governed by the Golden Rule, with Jesus as the ethical ideal.[35]

She was concerned about the new urban economy's inequities between the rich and poor, questioning whether capitalism could ever be a just system. In the last decade of her life, Willard embraced Christian socialism and believed that poverty caused intemperance.[36] The equality of women and men was at the heart of Willard's ideals. Willard was keenly aware of education inequities and political inequality in male and female education. When she was just in her twenties, she agreed with Henry Ward Beecher, a populist minister, that women should have the right to vote.[37]

In the spring of 1868, Willard made preparations to travel to Europe to study, and she committed to "the cause of woman" after attending a lecture by Theodore Tilton, editor of *The Independent* and a well-known women's rights speaker. Willard committed to using her Christian beliefs to advocate on behalf of women. "Willard differed from other prominent women activists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Matilda Joslyn Gage, who grounded their women's rights arguments not in Christian ethics but in natural rights philosophy."[38]

When Willard accepted the mantle of being president of the WCTU, this group increased from a small and struggling group, drawing its constituency mainly from the

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[34] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, 22.

[35] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel,* 22.

[36] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, 22.

[37] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, 23.

[38] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel,* 24.

Midwest and Northeast and expanding into the South and Far West. By the late 1880s, it was the largest women's organization of its time.[39] Under Willard's leadership, WCTU championed many causes beyond the temperance focus, including women's suffrage, prison reform, the support of the rising labor movement, with special attention given to women's working conditions, health reforms, and other women's issues.[40] "At the close of the nineteenth century, the WCTU was one of the most influential organizations in the United States for addressing women's issues and producing strong, independent women, who entered the public world, determined to change it."[41]

As an outgrowth, it produced independent women willing to stand up and advocate for other women in their most distressing issues.[42] In redefining and reconstructing the role of women, Willard believed that the WCTU's defining work was "shaping Christian women who were devoted to improving society and culture to reform philanthropy, patriotism, and religion."[43] It should be noted that Willard's ideal of equality for men and women was not realized during her time, nor is it a reality today. Willard tried to work within the framework of the known gender roles during her time; many male reformers could not or would not see Willard's expansion of the qualities that both men and women could equally embrace.[44]

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[39] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, 26.

[40] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, 26.

[41] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, 26.

[42] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel,* 26.

[43] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel,* 27.

[44] Edwards and Gifford, *Gender and the Social Gospel*, 31.

Mary E. Richmond

Another woman who worked in the Social Gospel Movement was Mary Richmond, who saw the connection between charitable groups and Christ's teaching. Mary E. Richmond (1861-1928) was a leader in the nineteenth-century charity organizational movement and single-handedly transformed social work into a professional industry while keeping the Christian tenet of loving your neighbor.[45] Mary "drew explicitly on ideals and principles of the gospel social in formulating a civic conception of social work."[46]

In her essay titled "Shaping a Civic Profession: Mary Richmond, the Social Gospel, and Social Work," Elizabeth N. Agnew writes that historian Robert Handy understood "that the social gospel represented a mixture of progressive, Christian theological response to the challenges of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration in late nineteenth-century America."[47] For Mary Richmond, "the social gospel's social orientation encouraged Richmond to rethink individually oriented, nineteenth-century practices of charity and to introduce into the emerging profession of 'applied philanthropy.'"[48]

Mary was unlike her counterparts in this growing field of social gospel activists; she was not from a white middle-class family that generally attended college and was

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[45] Elizabeth N. Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession: Mary Richmond, the Social Gospel, and Social Work," in *Gender and the Social Gospel*, ed. Wendy J. Deichmann Edwards and Carolyn De Suarte Gifford (Urbana, IL: and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 116.

[46] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 116.

[47] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 116.

[48] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 117.

motivated by *noblesse oblige*.[49] Mary was orphaned at the age of seven, grew up in abject poverty, and was reared by her maternal grandmother in Baltimore.[50] Because Mary grew up in an urban area, she was more likely to experience the hardships that the lower-class people were subjected to: little to no healthcare, overcrowding in the apartment complexes, alcoholism, prostitution, unhealthy working conditions for both adults and children, and racial discrimination.[51] Although Mary witnessed and hated the lack of civil rights for ex-slaves, her work did not concentrate on doing anything substantial in this area of justice; Mary's chief concern was to establish a nationwide network of charity organizations, which she was able to do in 1900 when she assumed the helm of the Philadelphia Society for Organizing Charity.[52]

In 1909, she accepted another director position at the Charity Organization Department at the Russell Sage Foundation in New York City– but this assignment came with a ten-million-dollar gift established by the widow of Russell Sage.[53] Mary improved the living and social conditions of her constituents by providing education, training, and research.[54]

> Mary retained this position for the balance of her life and was able to concentrate on making social work a professional organization that would uplift families and society. Over the course of her entire career, Richmond published numerous books and essays on charitable methods and philosophies, and her *magnum opus*,

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[49] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 118.

[50] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 118.

[51] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 118.

[52] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 118.

[53] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 119.

[54] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 119.

> 'Social Diagnosis,' became the first definitive exposition of social casework methods and their relationship to social reform more broadly.[55]

Richmond and her colleagues pioneered their work in charitable groups by utilizing the foundation of the social gospel theology.[56] She understood the impact of befriending people in need by insisting that social workers become friends with those families who are included in their daily assignments.[57] In 1899, Mary wrote a manual entitled "Friendly Visiting Among the Poor." By forging friendships, the social worker became intimate with the families to see what help was most needed and what agencies would be the most helpful in correcting the problems that arose.[58] Richmond echoed the social gospel minister Washington Gladden, "who believed that the test of charity was whether it made a gift a 'vehicle for the communication of the divine life.'"[59] The social workers served as role models for clean and decent living for the mothers of the families who needed help. The social workers encouraged moral living amongst the families receiving charitable assistance.[60] While this approach was used for some time, Mary wrote a subsequent manual, *The Good Neighbor in the Modern City*. It was soon replaced with the ethos that church members could provide care for individuals and, in turn, refer

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[55] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 119.

[56] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 121.

[57] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 121.

[58] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 122.

[59] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 122.

[60] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 122.

them to charity societies.[61] Mary believed the church should provide the primary impetus to undertake "earnest effort to make the world better."[62]

Mary Richmond transported the Social Gospel Movement to social work.[63] This creative use of the Progressive method aided many families in Baltimore, Richmond, New York, and overseas. Much of this type of work was being done in London.[64]

An important area where this work was being neglected was in the African American community. It would be up to the progressive churches to intercede on behalf of the African American community. This community suffered from urbanization, industrialization, and most importantly, racial discrimination, which affected every facet of the African Americans' lives.

Activists Whose Work Mirrors the Social Gospel Theory

Ingrid Overacker, in her essay titled "True to Our God: African American Women as Christian Activists in Rochester, New York," wrote that "African Americans practiced a Christian activism and social engagement that predated the social gospel movement when they resisted slavery, throughout the abolition movement, and during the development of the free church."[65] Overacker writes,

> African American women played the central role in nurturing and sustaining the African American church during the first four decades of the twentieth century. How is it, then, that scholars of the social gospel movement have managed to miss

[61] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 122.

[62] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 123.

[63] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 123.

[64] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 123.

[65] Agnew, "Shaping a Civic Profession," 123.

> most of the Christian activity of African American women and men in addressing the needs of their people in urban centers throughout America?"[66]

The response to this question is, just as in most areas of life, the voices of African Americans were muted before the twenty-first century. Whether in academia or the liberal and conservative churches of Protestantism, Reformed Denominations, Catholicism, etc., African Americans were thought to be second-class citizens. The American Constitution states that African Americans were to be counted as three-fifths of a person. With such a denigrated position spelled out in the nation's chief document for law and order, why would Americans view the once enslaved persons as whole human beings who were endowed with the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness?

"The separation of the history of the social gospel movement from the history of African American Christian activism also reflects differing perspectives on racism and its role in preventing the coming of the Kingdom."[67]

> It is the responsibility of African American Christians to create communities in which African American women, men, and children can learn who they are as God's children and what they are capable of as individual human beings so that they can answer God's call. It is the responsibility of the church to provide a setting for that community.[68]

Within the Black church, the care for the neglect of people's minds, bodies, and souls became of utmost importance. Poverty, sickness, mental illnesses, physical illnesses, and racial discrimination were rampant. Black people could only turn to their communities for the help they desperately needed. The Black church became such a place — the

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[66] Ingrid Overacker, "True to Our God: African American Women as Christian Activists in Rochester, New York," in *Gender and the Social Gospel,* ed. Wendy J. Deichmann and Carolyn De Swarte Gifford (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 202.

[67] Overacker, "True to our God," 203.

[68] Overacker, "True to our God," 204.

community center where individuals were taught how to read, write, take care of family needs, find jobs, and provide a sense of spiritual uplift. It was in this community that the social gospel took root— perhaps not in the White liberal academic sense, but in the understanding that African Americans believed that by looking out for each other and lending a helping hand, the work of Jesus was being done. The Kingdom of God was being instituted in the neighborhoods where mothers, fathers, grandmothers, aunts, uncles, cousins, and extended family members, as well as play family members, looked to the well-being and interests of those in the community.[69] Since the Black church became the dispenser of charitable intercessions, the families receiving the assistance were expected to attend church services regularly and live moral lives.

The church was the conduit through which philanthropic resources were extended, but living righteously was part and parcel of this unwritten agreement. In this way, the families were exposed to Christian teaching and expected to live a life honoring God.[70] Engaging in lifestyles such as prostitution, exhibiting maladaptive social behavior, drinking excessively, using profane language, and general lawlessness would engender the wrath of the Christian community, and this would lead to ostracizing the individual from the greater community. The African American women were the backbone of this outreach. These social gospel evangelists made sure that no family was left behind.[71]

The ultimate goal of this Christian activism was the confrontation of racism, which was experienced daily in the lives of African Americans.[72] The Social Gospel

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[69] Overacker, “True to our God,” 205.

[70] Overacker, “True to our God,” 206.

[71] Overacker, “True to Our God,” 202.

[72] Overacker, “True to our God,” 205.

Movement was the only viable solution to the litany of social ills affecting an entire race. However, it was not until the late twentieth century that the Social Gospel Theology, in skillful hands, went down the inequities in education, housing, poverty, and some work environments in a seismic way. "The social thought and action of Martin Luther King, Jr. was paradigmatic of what the social gospel really is or ought to be, in the contemporary world."[73] King credited the readings of Walter Rauschenbusch and Mahatma Gandhi's ethics of nonviolence as strong influences in his social views.[74]

According to Michael Dwayne Blackwell, in his essay titled "In the Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.," the Social Gospel of Faye Wattleton and Marian Wright Edelman argued,

> The social gospel is a discernment that one is never solitary: one is always a person-in-community. As such, the person who embraces the social gospel theology does not merely have an inclination towards others in an arbitrary, inconsequential, and self-congratulatory way; instead that person is compelled by conviction to do the hard work of applying theory to practice — not only to address the problems daily confronting the lives of the disadvantaged and the negligence infecting the lives of the better off, but also to redress these matters in progressively efficacious ways. The social gospel is a marshaling of all the tools at one's disposal to identify and eliminate the inequities that frustrate the lives of many and disallow their full participation in the dynamics of citizenship.[75]

Expanding the notion of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Social Gospel Theology, Blackwell writes,

> The social gospel is a disposition to be seriously and urgently concerned with the multiple and cumulative causes of the physical, intellectual, psychological, and spiritual abuses that affect the lives of countless Americans. The social gospel is

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[73] Michael Dwayne Blackwell, "In the Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.: The Social Gospel of Faye Wattleton and Marian Wright Edelman," in *Gender and the Social Gospel,* ed. Wendy J Deichmann Edwards and Carolyn De Swarte Gifford (Urbana, IL: and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 217.

[74] Blackwell, "In the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.," 217.

[75] Blackwell, "In the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.," 218.

> the recognition of the fact that the integrity of a nation is not characterized by individual successes but rather by how the dispossessed and disaffected are treated, handled, or addressed.[76]

Dr. King, in using the social gospel theology for addressing racial inequities,[77] "had a strong affinity to the biblical witness. Prophets such as Amos, Micah, and Isaiah stressed the importance of doing right, effecting justice in the land, and redressing the concerns of the poor and the oppressed. King also found in the words of Jesus confirmation for relieving the burdens of 'the least of these' (Matthew 25:31-46), as well as reconciliation with one's enemies."[78]

With the death of Rev. King, the old guard of the Social Gospel non-violent movement was replaced with a new guard of protest movements that did not hold to the tenets of the Gandhian non-violent way. Young leaders like Stokely Carmichael wanted Black people to actively confront the police and demonstrators who kicked, punched, spat, and attempted to beat males and females alike. The new and upcoming chant was "Black Power!" Stokely and the leaders of this new movement, and the leaders of the Black Panther Party, wanted nothing to do with social gospel theology or Christianity.

Conclusion

The question must be asked, "Can the social gospel be used to confront the social ills in the twenty-first century?" Could the social gospel be helpful to lift people out of poverty, homelessness, mental illness, and other ills? Could the Social Gospel Theology

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[76] Blackwell, "In the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.," 218.

[77] Blackwell, "In the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.," 219.

[78] Blackwell, "In the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.," 218.

provide a way to address domestic violence and intimate partner abuse? Is it possible that by once again activating the "beloved community," women and men who find themselves shrinking as humans at the abusive hands of their spouse or intimate partner find hope and help within the walls of the church?

I believe the church should be an integral part of any treatment or resource provided to victims of domestic violence. The church is uniquely equipped to deal with the oppressed and the brokenhearted. In the good Samaritan parable, Jesus Christ speaks to the Christian today. In the parable, it is the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) who tends to the wounds of the individual beaten up and left for dead. The hero of the story takes the wounded person to a respectable lodging place and tells the innkeeper that whatever the battered person needs, he will be compensated for it.

The Good Samaritan provided the resources so the battered person could get the required help. The Good Samaritan did not think about the cost of taking care of this stranger. The good Samaritan, out of compassion for another human being, without regard to race, creed, or religion, stopped and gave a helping hand to someone in need. This is the social gospel in action, and Jesus Christ teaches it. We, who are Christians, should be just as eager to put Jesus' teaching into action.

For victims of domestic abuse, the church should be a one-stop shop where the victims can be transformed into survivors. Regardless of the societal norms that seem to envelop and hamstring the actions of the church, the pastors and leaders must understand that they have a responsibility to act. By not acting or providing meaningful help, the battered individual may resort to going back into the abusive relationship or, worse, try to find comfort on the street and resort to behavior that would be harmful to them.

Additionally, the notion of Social Gospel, defined by Michael Blackwell, sets the stage where the church takes its proper role. Blackwell writes, "The social gospel is a disposition to be seriously and urgently concerned with the multiple and cumulative causes of the physical, intellectual, psychological, and spiritual abuses that affect the lives of countless Americans."[79] This definition spells out that spiritual abuses can occur when the multiple and cumulative causes of social evils are left unchecked. Spiritual abuses for the individual could mean being susceptible to religious cults to find relief or taking part in satanic activities. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to delve into the complexities of spiritual abuse. Still, the church must be on guard and be the watchman on the wall to be ready to help and intervene when the churched or unchurched come to the doorstep of the church to seek help and assistance.

As a survivor of domestic abuse, I understand firsthand what it feels like when the senior pastor or the clergy staff fails to offer meaningful assistance. I was sent back into an abusive relationship, and the effect on my children was disastrous to the extent that one of my children is still in therapy. The impact of being a witness to abuse in the home is something that a person never forgets, no matter how hard they may try.

The history of the Social Gospel Theology Movement started with the White liberal mainline denominations, with little or no thought for women or newly freed slave issues. Nonetheless, the Social Gospel Theology was groundbreaking in that the words of Jesus were not limited to antiquated thoughts and ideas. In contrast, the gospel application was limited to White people's concerns. However, the issues that the early Social Gospel preachers attended to benefited White America.

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[79] Blackwell, "In the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.," 218.

Who would have envisioned that Jesus' teachings would liberate the thoughts of prophetic African American Christians to expand the notion that Christ's words included fairness, equity, and justice for Blacks and Whites alike? Thank God that Black men and women were able to use their Holy Ghost imagination to picture an existence where, if God could liberate the children of Israel from slavery and harsh treatment, then Jesus' words could liberate them by building a community to uplift each other and hold each other accountable. Yes, the Social Gospel Theology is needed for the twenty-first-century church to help victims of domestic abuse, and by raising awareness of domestic abuse and providing training to the congregants, people no longer have to suffer in silence. Help is on the way!

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Modeling and imitation are conclusive explanations for why abusers of domestic violence do what they do. Many abusers have observed such violent and aggressive behavior and imitate the physical and verbal components of the abusive behavior. This type of behavior becomes ingrained in the psyche of the abuser, and the victim is trapped unless there is some form of relief. "The issue of Domestic Violence is an important area of public, political, and academic concern that goes to the heart of the institution of the family and marriage and of gender relations between men and women."[1]

What is missing from the description of agencies where domestic violence is an issue is the listing of the church. Why would "the church" not be listed amongst the major institutions that are grappling with this social, cultural, and political problem? For many people, the teachings of the church have contributed to the sanctioning of domestic violence. The antiquated belief that a woman was a man's property and thus could be treated as a servant was embedded in the thinking of the Roman and Hellenistic cultures.[2] The teachings of many passages in the New Testament follow the hierarchical structure

[1] Rebecca E. Dobash and Russel P. Dobash, "Domestic Violence: Sociological Perspectives," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, ed. James D. Wright (Manchester, UK: University of Manchester, 2015), 633.

[2] Dobash and Dobash, "Domestic Violence," 634.

of the Roman army, where the husband was expected to rule the house, much like a general would run a division or wing of the Roman army. Whatever the husband dictates, the members of the household are obligated to do as demanded. Punishment was meted out based on the temperament of the husband. In the book titled *#CHURCHTOO*, Emily Joy Allison says that the church's purity culture upholds abuse. She tells of a youth pastor who singled her out to start a romantic relationship with her. She states that her abuser was a trusted adult, who would regularly attend Sunday dinners at the house, and one who her Godly parents really liked.[3]

Allison says that although she was sixteen years old, her evangelical experience left her ill-equipped to deal with the realities of sex or life.[4] Her abuser told her that God only wanted her with godly men, not young boys her age who really did not love God. Allison stated, "Every time I thought I was on the right track, an authority figure had stepped in to show me that I wasn't pleasing God as much as I thought. Maybe this was finally the Godly husband I had been promised."[5]

This "romantic relationship" led to heavy petting, kissing, and, a few months later, severe rebuke from her parents once they somehow found out. She was told that she was a disgrace to the family and must immediately apologize to the youth pastor. She was called a liar and a sinner. Emily Allison writes that this incident led her to therapy years later.[6]

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[3] Emily Joy Allison, *#CHURCHTOO: How Purity Culture Upholds Abuse and How to Find Healing* (Minneapolis, MN: Broadleaf Books, 2021), 8-9.

[4] Allison, *#CHURCHTOO,* 8-9.

[5] Allison, *#CHURCHTOO,* 8-9.

[6] Allison, *#CHURCHTOO*, 11-13.

In Europe in the late 1700s, challenges to male authority gave way to laws being established that would provide little protection for women. "These rights were slowly eroded over time through the development of the Canon Law and the gradual alteration of legal systems in Europe and Britain to punishments allowing chastisement that did not kill or maim."[7] In 1765, Sir William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, noted that conventional cultural beliefs and common legal practices endorsed a man's right to use "moderate" chastisement against his wife.[8] Blackstone's *Commentaries* cemented the practice of moderate chastisement in the culture of the British and soon was on the way across the Atlantic Ocean to the newly formed United States of America.[9]

The limited protections that the law provided did not shield women from the shame, hurt, and disgrace that women felt and still feel today as victims of domestic abuse or intimate partner violence (including sexual abuse). As in Europe, the United States was slowly evolving to recognize that laws governing abuse of spouses and intimate partners are in the best interest of society. Today, the church can correct its old and flawed way of not addressing the issue of domestic violence and intimate partner abuse by being a voice for one of the most vulnerable members of humankind– the victims.

As the church seeks to find its footing in being a voice and a resource for the victims of domestic violence, the church can also partner with other social science disciplines to be effective in combating this social ill. The church can be at the forefront in the public forum by calling for and advocating for social justice for the victims of

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[7] Dobash and Dobash, "Domestic Violence," 634.

[8] Dobash and Dobash, "Domestic Violence," 634.

[9] Dobash and Dobash, "Domestic Violence," 634.

domestic violence and intimate partner violence for straight, LGBT, and Q+ persons. The church can also be a leading force for implementing healing for both the abused and the abuser. As the church integrates its theological teachings with best-practice social learning experiments, radical changes can be made in the awareness and treatment of this social ill.

Domestic Abuse Definition

What does the term domestic violence mean? "The terms wife beating, battered wives, wife abuse, woman abuse, spouse abuse, family violence, domestic violence, and intimate partner violence have all been used to describe this phenomenon."[10] Abuse can take many forms, including verbal, emotional, and sexual. The initial terminology often referenced the notion of a husband and wife, but over time, it has evolved to include same-sex partners and cohabitating relationships. Social scientists and anthropologists examine society and culture to determine why aggression, such as domestic violence, occurs.

Review of the Literature

Psychological learning theories have influenced explanations of crime and deviance. For example, Albert Bandura explained "social learning theory by assuming that behavior was first learned by imitation (or modeling) and then sustained by social contingency, that is, the consequence of such behavior."[11] "Many theories have been

[10] Dobash and Dobash, "Domestic Violence," 633.

proposed to explain human behavior over the years."[12] "Except for elementary reflexes, people are not equipped with inborn repertoires of behavior. They must learn them. New response patterns can be acquired either by direct experiences or by observation."[13] If humans only had to rely on the effects of their own actions, then learning would be highly time-consuming and time-intensive, and to some extent, hazardous.

Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling.[14] Modeling, according to Bandura, "From observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions, this coded information serves as a guide for action."[15] "Monkey see, monkey do" is the modern-day expression that accurately reflects this theory of modeling. Bandura also states that people cannot learn much by observation unless they accurately perceive what is specifically modeled and the actions contained therein. Additionally, people cannot act on observations if they do not remember what they have just seen.

The Social Learning Theory includes therapy to stop abusive behavior. In a social learning study by Bandura (1960 and Bandura and Walters 1959), highly aggressive boys have been found to have parents who strongly disapprove, reprimand, and punish aggression in the home.[16]

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[11] Chien Ju Huang and Tiffany Gunn, "An Examination of Domestic Violence in an African American Community in North Carolina: Causes and Consequences," *Journal of Black Studies* 31, no. 6 (2001): 793, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2668047.

[12] Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1977), 2.

[13] Bandura, *Social Learning Theory,* 16.

[14] Bandura, *Social Learning Theory,* 22.

[15] Bandura, *Social Learning Theory*, 22.

[16] Alberta Bandura and Richard H. Walters, *Social Learning and Personality Development* (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), 18.

> Although it is evident that informal observation of good models is used in all cultures to promote the acquisition of socially sanctioned behavior patterns, the cultural importance of observational learning is especially apparent in accounts given by anthropologists of the process of socialization in societies other than our own.[17]

In many cultures, "children do not do what adults tell them to do, but rather what they see other adults do."[18]

Bandura and associates performed a series of experiments that showcased imitable acts of deviant behavior to a group of nursery school children by adults who performed the aggressive acts, as well as adults who did not perform acts of aggression towards an inflatable doll. As was hypothesized, the preschoolers who witnessed the aggressive adults performing physical and verbal aggression toward the large inflatable doll also imitated aggressive behaviors. The preschoolers who witnessed the non-aggressive adults virtually ignored the large inflatable doll. The preschoolers did not show any acts of aggression towards the large inflatable doll.[19]

Bandura and Walters compared the effects of real-life models by using films showing human aggression and cartoons showing aggression to preschool children. In the movies showing human aggression, preschoolers saw adults showing aggression towards an inflated doll. They also witnessed cartoon-like characters doing the same. The preschoolers exhibited aggressive behaviors toward an inflated doll. For those preschoolers who were shown movies without the aggressive human role model, the preschoolers did not exhibit similar aggressive behavior toward an inflated doll.[20]

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[17] Bandura and Walters, *Social Learning,* 47.

[18] Bandura and Walters, *Social Learning,* 49.

[19] Bandura and Walters, *Social Learning,* 69.

[20] Bandura and Walters, *Social Learning,* 69.

It was evident from this study that children who witnessed aggressive models responded in like fashion by precisely imitating the aggressive actions. For the model that used no aggression (the control group), these children did not show any deviant patterns of behavior. "Bandura found that fathers who expressed much indirect hostility toward their wives had sons who tended to display oppositional behavior."[21]

Bandura's clinical studies illuminated that children whose parents demonstrate deviant behavior are more likely to reproduce deviant behavior.[22]

> Mihalic and Elliott (1997) suggested that social learning theory is one of marital violence literature's most popular explanatory perspectives. During childhood and adolescence, observations of how parents and significant others behaved in intimate relationships provided an initial learning of behavioral alternatives that were believed to be 'appropriate' for these relationships. If the family of origin handled stresses and frustrations with anger and aggression, the person who has grown up in such an environment would be at a greater risk of exhibiting these same behaviors when he or she witnesses or experiences similar conditions as an adult.[23]

Other Theories Relating to Social Learning Theory

Some research on the causes of spousal abuse in the African American community has been undertaken, and in some instances, Staples suggested that spousal violence in the lower socio-economic status is seen as a normative experience.[24] Many children grow up in an environment where the mother is routinely abused physically or verbally by the father or the man cohabitating with the family. While there are a plethora of causes why the abuse happens (i.e., substance abuse problems, alcohol abuse, or

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[21] Bandura and Walters, *Social Learning,* 70.

[22] Bandura and Walters, *Social Learning,* 70.

[23] Huang and Gunn, "An Examination of Domestic Violence," 794.

[24] Huang and Gunn, "An Examination of Domestic Violence," 794

psychological problems), the size and strength of the African American males were a key connection to why this abuse of African American women happened.

Secondhand abuse, which Ron Clark writes about in his book, *Freeing the Oppressed*, details research that indicates, "Children who witness acts of domestic violence are harmed in their emotional, mental, and physical development."[25] Clark states that research has shown the harmful effects of second-hand smoke, and research indicates that children who witness acts of abuse are harmed as well. Children who also witness verbal abuse between their parents or significant others in the home suffer mental maladjustment.[26]

Social Control Theory, developed by Emile Durkheim, developed the concept of social control back in the nineteenth century. Social control is the collection of material and symbolic resources society has at its disposal to ensure the behavioral conformity of its members. It consists of a mixed collection of prescribed and sanctioned rules and principles.[27] Social control can be described as the effects that social bonds have on individuals. Crime and deviant behavior are more likely to occur when the social bonds are weak or broken.[28] "Shoemaker argued that spouse abuse is a result of weakened social or personal factors that were generated through the socialization process and current social institutions."[29]

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[25] Ron Clark, *Freeing the Oppressed* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 17.

[26] Clark, *Freeing the Oppressed,* 17.

[27] Huang and Gunn, "An Examination of Domestic Violence," 795.

[28] Huang and Gunn, "An Examination of Domestic Violence," 795.

[29] Huang and Gunn, "An Examination of Domestic Violence," 795.

> Travis Hirschi (1969) defined social bond as the connection between individuals and society, usually through social institutions. Social bond theory has four distinct parts: attachment, investment, involvement, and belief. Attachment refers to the psychological and emotional bond one feels toward other persons or groups, and how the individual feels and cares about himself or herself and his or her feelings. Investment is based on costly approaches such as money, time, effort, status, and education. Involvement involves participation in conventional and legitimate activities. Belief refers to the acceptance of a conventional value system (Shoemaker, 1996).[30]

Concerning African Americans, some sociologists have researched the influence of supportive networks on their well-being. It was found that supportive networks are organized in the African American community through the use of social networks. Social networks consist of family, friends, and church members and influence individuals, families, and community contacts.[31]

Hypothesis Examination

Two theories were tested to study the causes and consequences of spousal abuse: the Social Learning Theory and the Social Control Theory. This chapter will only examine the testing of the Social Learning Theory, as this theory is aligned with the hypothesis that the doctoral project is seeking to examine. The hypothesis testing the Social Learning Theory is thus:

Hypothesis: "People who come from families with a history of domestic violence tend to be involved in abusive relationships themselves more often than people who come from normal families."[32]

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[30] Huang and Gunn, "An Examination of Domestic Violence," 795.

[31] Huang and Gunn, "An Examination of Domestic Violence," 796.

[32] Huang and Gunn, "An Examination of Domestic Violence," 799.

Variables and Operationalizations

Dependent Variables

> Abusive relationship (physical or behavioral): To measure physical abuse, participants were asked, 'Have you and your spouse ever engaged in physical conflict?' Physical abuse was coded as 1 for never, 2 for occasionally, 3 for sometimes, 4 for usually, and 5 for always. To measure behavioral abuse, participants were asked if they were currently involved in a close relationship (for example, marriage, dating, or cohabitation) and then asked if they had ever encountered such situations, among others, as cannot use the telephone, cannot see family or friends, do not have control over money, and cannot make your own decisions. Each behavior was coded as 0 for no and 1 for yes. An index of behavioral symptoms was created, summing up all the answers from nine questions altogether, with a range from 0 to 9.[33]

Independent Variables

Family history was measured by participants in the following three questions: In your family, did your parents have a history of domestic violence? Has either parent ever had a physical dispute with you? Or with your sibling? Answers ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (always).[34]

Control Variable

Gender: To assess the impact of family violence, social support, and socioeconomic status, gender is controlled. Gender was measured by asking participants, "What is your gender"? Answers were male (1) and female (0).

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[33] Huang and Gunn, "An Examination of Domestic Violence," 801.

[34] Huang and Gunn, "An Examination of Domestic Violence," 801.

Summary and Conclusions From the Study

Hypothesis 1: People who come from families with a history of domestic violence tend to be involved in abusive relationships themselves more often than people who come from normal families. This was supported by the correlation and regression analyses. Significant relationships exist between the history of family abuse and domestic violence for both males and females. The most significant relationship is between physical abuse and having parents who themselves grew up in families with a history of violence. This hypothesis is also supported by a review of the literature.[35]

Old Testament Narratives of Domestic Violence

The Bible is replete with narratives of domestic violence. Cain killed Abel in a fit of anger because GOD accepted Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's (Genesis 4:1-12). Abram and Sarai abused Hagar by making her leave the family home when she was pregnant with Abram's son. The record states that Sarai gave Hagar to Abram since Sarai was barren. After Hagar became pregnant, Sarai complained that Hagar disrespected her since she could not conceive. Abram told Sarai that Hagar was her maid (property) and she could do as she wished. Sarai abused Hagar (the KJV says dealt hardly with her), and Hagar ran out of the house with very few provisions (Genesis 16:1-7). Sarai physically abused Hagar, and Abram "went into" (raped) Hagar without her consent.

Judges chapter nineteen tells a horrific story in which a traveler, his handmaid, and a young man were lodging with a Hebrew field owner, and as they were eating and drinking, a mob of men, certain sons of Belial, surrounded the house and beat on the door

[35] Huang and Gunn, "An Examination of Domestic Violence," 808.

demanding that the homeowner send the traveler out so that they could "know him." The homeowner says to the sons of Belial not to do this wicked thing, but offers his daughter and concubine to them, but the sons of Belial refused, and wanted the traveler's maiden. The handmaid was handed over to the men and abused (raped) all night long (Judges 19:25-28).

The Social Learning Theory as Evidenced in 2 Samuel 11

In 2 Samuel 11:1-16, the Bible tells the story of King David and Bathsheba. King David used his position and power as king to rape another man's wife. King David's son, Amnon, rapes his half-sister Tamar with the advice of his cousin. As has been demonstrated with the studies and experiments concerning the Social Learning Theory, children often repeat violent acts when it is witnessed in the home over an extended period.

Amnon was exposed to his father's abuse of power, position, and privilege, and imitated the example that was set before him. The modeling of David's patriarchal privilege was on display for the entire kingdom to witness. The men also saw this type of toxic masculine behavior in the kingdom. It is no wonder that not even Princess Tamar was safe from the sexual abuse that was done at the hands of her brother, Amnon.

Domestic violence is also evident in this royal family. As King David was a man of war, his sons were conditioned to see him kill enemies inside and outside of the kingdom. To witness so much killing firsthand, it normalized killing for one's safety or preservation. The fact that Absalom, Tamar's brother, plotted over a two-year period to kill his half-brother is consistent with the sociological explanation of domestic violence.

These explanations "emphasize male privilege, power, and control and stress the importance of patriarchal beliefs and ideals and the laws, policies, and practices associated with them"[36]

The Historical Foundations Narrative as Evidenced in the Social Learning Theory

The historical narrative dealt with in this doctoral project thesis speaks to the need for a safe place for persons to thrive in life. The historical narrative shows how many people in the abolitionist community bonded and banded together to form a series of safe houses to help the runaway slaves escape from the South to the North in order to obtain freedom. The enslaved people were running away to escape the horrific abuses at the hands of their owners. If freedom were not possible, their lives would be marked by despair, depression, hopelessness, negative self-worth, bodily and mental scarring, as well as loss of agency. Therefore, since social modeling is the central theme in the social learning theory, the abuse that the slave masters meted out was also duplicated in the slave quarters by the husband or the male in charge.

Jeff Forret writes, "Violence, however, permitted slave men to display their manhood in the quarters. There, male slaves could channel the anger and frustration they repressed when around the master and liberate themselves temporarily from their powerlessness."[37] Of course, the cause of violence in the slave quarters was caused by a series of complex factors, but it is certain that the enslaved men were modeling behaviors witnessed firsthand.

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[36] Dobash and Dobash, *Domestic Violence,* 633.

[37] Jeff Forret, "Conflict and the 'Slave Community': Violence among Slaves in Upcountry South Carolina," *Journal of Southern History* 74, no. 3 (2008): 570, https://doi.org/10.2307/27650229.

The Social Gospel Theory as Evidenced in the Social Learning Theory

The Social Gospel Theory is evidenced in the Social Learning Theory in that modeling is helping people who are living on the margins of society, which is precisely what is needed to lift humanity. Since modeling and imitation are the hallmarks of the Social Learning paradigm, then it is undeniable that Christians and non-Christians alike witness people provide food for the homeless, organize protests for unskilled laborers to make a decent wage, help single mothers find adequate housing for their families, advocating on behalf of lower socio-economic children to be exposed to better learning and educational opportunities, and advocating for those with mental disabilities to have a chance to receive mental health services.

Humanity would be in a much better condition if each one could model and demonstrate care and compassion; then domestic violence and abuse would not be as prevalent in today's society. Deviant behavior would not be on display continuously, and love in action would be on display and normalized by many in the "beloved community." Additionally, since the Social Gospel Movement realizes that it takes a village to help those in need, abusers would get immediate help to change their deviant behavior, and the abused would get immediate care and comfort. Healing would start at once instead of happening by chance or not at all.

Institutional Policies and Practices

> Early investigations of policy and institutional practices in the 1970s revealed considerable failure on the part of legal and social agencies to provide support and protection for women victims and their children, as well as a reluctance to deal with male perpetrators. Recent research charts the many changes in policy, practices, and innovations aimed at ending men's violence and providing safety and security to women and children. The initial focus was on the police and the

> long-established practice of either ignoring domestic violence or treating it as a nuisance, not 'real' violence, and not 'real' police work. In the United States, several high-profile class actions against police departments were brought by feminist advocates on behalf of women who sought but did not receive police intervention after being beaten by their husband or male partner.
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> These and other efforts elsewhere led to early changes within the criminal justice systems of several countries. Numerous initiatives included policies to strengthen arrest, civil protection orders, and exclusion orders, as well as the introduction of dedicated domestic violence courts. Innovating sentencing and probation order in some locations also included participation on the newly created programs for violent abusers such as those pioneered in Duluth, Minnesota, and later introduced in countries throughout the world.[38]

As state-sanctioned institutions make headway in tackling domestic violence safety for the victims, the church is still quiet on this issue. The Twenty-First-Century church should know how to partner with local authorities, homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, social agencies, etc. However, this is not happening for the most part, and the question has to be asked, "Why not?" Why does the church not come to the forefront with all of its new theologies and paradigms on grace, faith, and love? This lack of proactive action is reminiscent of the church's lack of action on the issue of slavery. (Some northern churches were active in the anti-slavery movement, like the Quakers, and some in the "Rights Era). With all of the domestic violence education resources available for clergy and laity, it should be mandatory for ministers and pastors to obtain a certificate in this area. While Pastoral Care and Counseling are effective in treating spiritual distress, domestic violence training coupled with Pastoral Care and Counseling would allow the pastor to treat the congregant holistically.

In his book, *From Hurt to Healing*, Dr. Andrew Sung Park writes, "When people's deep wounds are not healed, the wounds become vortexes of troubled waters, intertwined with their own instinct of survival and fear. Many victims instinctively

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[38] Dobash and Dobash, *Domestic Violence,* 635.

synchronize their wavelengths with their offenders. They internalize their perpetrators' images and values and externalize them in treating their own victims."[39]

Park writes, "In this world of violence, the church must address the issue of these deep wounds (*han*) and the issue of sin if the church wants to be relevant and effective in transforming and healing the world."[40] Park also writes that his book distinguishes between the sinner and the sinned against. "The sinner takes the journey from his or her sin to salvation, while the sinner goes through a journey from his or her oppression to liberation or deliverance."[41]

Park makes this distinction because in the healing of the wounded, the sinner, also known as the oppressor, needs salvation from their own sin, and the sinned against, or the oppressed, need liberation. He writes that in most Christian circles, liberation and salvation essentially mean the same thing– but those words mean different things to the two groups.[42] He writes that concerning the case of Rev. Rooney, a pastor of a Roman Catholic Church who committed suicide because four women had stated he had touched them inappropriately when they were schoolgirls. If the church had heard the cries of the women and confronted him and reformed his behavior, his life could have been saved. Also, the women who reported the abuse would have felt heard and seen, and their wounds would have been healed.[43] Park writes that the wounded need healing and the

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[39] Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Window* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 3.

[40] Park, *From Hurt to Healing,* 3.

[41] Park, *From Hurt to Healing,* 3.

[42] Park, *From Hurt to Healing,* 4.

[43] Park, *From Hurt to Healing,* 4.

perpetrators need salvation.[44] While the abused women suffered from the deep wound (*han*) created by Rev. Rooney's abuse of power, they also developed shame from the abuse. Rev. Rooney suffered from guilt.[45]

In the church, sitting in the pews, there are many people. On any given Sunday, the pastor can be looking at oppressors, abusers, adulterers, aggressors, murderers, liars, and more. At the same time, those who are the victims of deviant behaviors are also sitting in the pews waiting to hear a word from God that will heal their wounds. In Christian theology, there is only a message for the sinner because sin is the only category we have to diagnose the wrongs of the world.[46] "We have drawn the map of salvation for sinners and have left those who have been sinned against to find the way themselves."[47] Our traditional approach to sin has to include a way of caring for the wounded soul. The message that God loves you is a start, but the abused woman or man wants to know that God will also provide a sense of solace and a breakthrough.

The church has to explore the unfamiliar theological territory of working toward healing the victims of sin and wrong.[48] In this way, the church should seek out promising new sociological, psychological, and other interdisciplinary theories so that collaboration will find the right mix for each individual situation. Then a win-win situation can be manifested for both the victim and the abuser.

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[44] Park, *From Hurt to Healing,* 4.

[45] Park, *From Hurt to Healing,* 9.

[46] Park, *From Hurt to Healing,* 9.

[47] Park, *From Hurt to Healing,* 9.

[48] Park, *From Hurt to Healing,* 7.

Conclusion

The Social Learning Theory is a valid model that proves imitation and modeling are processes where social behavior is acquired and modified. "The manner in which specific behavior patterns may be transmitted from generation to generation through a succession of models has been demonstrated in an experimental study by Jacobs and Campbell."[49]

> Children who witnessed the aggressive model rewarded showed more imitative physical and verbal aggression than children who saw a model punished. Research has shown that exposure to the punished model effectively inhibited the boys' aggressive responses.[50]

It is feasible that in domestic abuse situations, if the abuser had been introduced to some type of punishment for deviant acts of behavior on a consistent basis, then his or her aggression toward others would be less. What should be the church's response? Social cues demonstrated by the Sunday worship service seem to reinforce the notions that men are in charge and that women should simply stay in the pew and do as instructed. Knowingly or unknowingly, many African American and Caucasian evangelical churches teach and preach sermons that usually do not allow for a womanist perspective. Many of the teachings and sermons deal with a male "heroic" figure beside Jesus Christ. It should be verbalized that the women who followed and ministered with Jesus were not treated as second-class citizens.

As long as women are taught that their worth is tied to their husbands and household, they will feel that they are less than. When women are looked upon as less than, it makes it easier for the person in the relationship who is perceived to be stronger

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[49] Bandura and Walters, *Social Learning,* 72.

[50] Bandura and Walters, *Social Learning,* 82.

to abuse the other person. The church must learn how to incorporate imitating and modeling healthy Christian marital relationships where the husband is seen not as one who hits or verbally abuses his wife but as one who is loving, kind, and helpful. The same works for same-sex couples and heterosexual couples who are intimate partners. While some statistics show that the rate of domestic violence may be slightly higher in same-sex couple situations, it is crucial for the church to offer resources for all individuals experiencing domestic abuse. Raising awareness through training is a viable way to get lay leaders involved in sharing the love of Jesus.

When the parishioners are trained to listen and ask the most important question, "Are you safe?" — the church can become a safe space for those who are being hurt and violated by a member of their family. Parishioners can, in effect, be likened to "first responders." It is the first responders who are first on the scene to provide the needed medical help. Generally, it is the first responders who make the difference between life and death. Trained church members can be the first people who open their arms for a hug and say, "You are safe here."

As a survivor of domestic abuse, having a trained churchgoer wrap their arms around me and say, "You are safe," would have brought me great joy and a sense of comfort. In fact, remembering back, there was a first responder, so to speak — the head of the security team. Julio would make certain that my children and I safely got to our car at the end of each service and even went so far as to periodically check outside the church. Just knowing that my kids and I were safe within the hallowed halls of the church gave me great peace. It is imperative for all disciplines and all ministries to be made aware and trained in assisting abuse victims. The kingdom demands nothing less.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

Living in the twenty-first century should mean that a fitness test for any society should be based on how well the mental and physical health of those described as the "least of these" is prioritized. For those disciples who are in the vortex of a domestic violence relationship, there needs to be a support system in place that will assist the victim. This is where the church can be her parishioners' first line of defense. The title of this research is Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse Through Training. The hypothesis supporting this research is, "If the ministry leaders participate in a focused study on domestic violence, then they will be equipped to."

The pastor identified the participants as leaders within the church, including those recognized as "unofficial leaders" (lay leaders). Initially, ten invitations (see Appendix A) were personally sent to a list of leaders and lay leaders, both men and women, straight and gay. From these invitations, six responses were received — three females replied "yes," while two females replied that they would "not be able to participate" due to being in therapy for domestic abuse. It is important to mention that the former pastor's prior statement that domestic abuse is not present at the Broad Street UMC. This confirms the need for awareness and training of domestic abuse/violence. One man stated he was otherwise engaged, which resulted in a no. The other four invitees did not respond. Since

I was concerned about the low number of participants agreeing to be volunteers in this doctoral research, the pastor then submitted another list of six names to invite to participate in this doctoral research/project. One respondent stated that he would be out of town on vacation during the first two weeks of the project. Another invitee responded yes, while the other four did not respond. Thus, four participants were affirmed for this study.

The results of this final project affirm the hypothesis.. The verbal and written responses from the participants in this research unequivocally demonstrated that increasing awareness through training equipped the leadership and lay leaders of the church to offer limited assistance by providing a listening ear and a non-judgmental, safe space to victims.

This final project was cathartic for the participants, the guest presenters, and me, the facilitator. The copious amounts of information and shared discussions in a safe setting would have been ideal for me as I was limping my way through my domestic violence experience. My former churches did not have a ministry or support group where I could share my feelings. Resources about domestic violence were not offered to me or to my children. This final project allowed the group discussions to be free, enabling participants to share their abuse stories and devise a model of ministry that would keep each of them engaged in helping victims who could walk through the doors of Broad Street UMC, as well as those who are silently hiding in the pews. The eagerness to turn this final project into a ministry allowed the participants to see this opportunity as an extension of their discipleship to be able to assist the victims by providing a listening ear and tangible resources of agencies that would be able to lead the abused women or men

to start the road to becoming survivors. While the participants did not feel that they could be of any help to abuse victims before the final project, all participants reported that, because of the training and the raising of awareness of domestic violence, they were confident they could help.

The Context

The context for this research was Broad Street UMC, a small congregation of the United Methodist denomination. The church celebrated 150 years in existence in May 2025. Broad Street UMC is a historic fixture in the Columbus downtown area and is known and recognized for its ministry of feeding the homeless. Broad Street UMC was the home to Governors Joseph Foraker and William McKinley.

The congregation is currently made up of male and female, straight and gay parishioners. There are at least fifteen same sex married couples, both male and female. There are straight married couples as well as straight and gay singles in the congregation. The pastor, the context associate, and I invited participants from the broad swath of the congregation (leaders and lay leaders) to include male, female, straight, and gay, married and single. The final makeup of the participants was single females, and initially, one female was in a committed lesbian relationship, and one was in a committed lesbian marriage. The two other participants were straight females.

The congregation is predominantly White, female, and consists of retired professionals who are affluent. There is a small population of young adults who are active in the church, and one of the young adults agreed to participate in this final project.

Dr. Lori Reiber, a United Theological Seminary graduate, is the pastor of Broad Street UMC. Dr. Reiber assumed the senior pastorate in July 2025. The former pastor resigned in April 2024, and the church is trying to recover from the hurt and shock of the resignation from the former pastor. As a result of the resignation, several members left Broad Street.

Methodology

The final project used a qualitative research method. The data was analyzed by the responses from group discussions, pre- and post-questionnaires, reflective journal entries, and personal interviews. For the entire six weeks, I served as the facilitator. In weeks two through five, I delivered a thirty to forty-five minute lecture on the doctoral foundational chapters discussed explicitly for that week. I also shared my domestic abuse story in week two. I told my Tamar story so that the participants would see me as one of them and understand why this final project was dear to my heart.

The layout of the final project consisted of using the four foundational chapters that provided a baseline of information that would be presented. The four foundational chapters set the tone for the final project. They provided context for creating the hypothesis that, "if the ministry leaders participate in a focused study on domestic violence, then they will be equipped to identify those members who will benefit from a referral to a professional for treatment."

The Biblical Foundations' text for this final project was taken from 2 Samuel 13:1-22, the rape of Tamar. The graphic and horrific scene that the sacred text unfolds is as pivotal to this project as assisting abuse victims is central to this study. In the holy text, Tamar was raped by her half-brother Amnon and is banished from his house with shame

and dishonor. Tamar is given shelter and safety in the home of her brother Absalom, who instructs her to remain silent, as he will take care of things. Like many abuse victims, Tamar's voice is not heard, and she is not given the license to say anything. Raising awareness through training will teach leadership and lay leaders to listen to voices like Tamar's.

The Historical Foundations chapter examined the Underground Railroad to enable enslaved persons to find freedom through a network of safe houses. Safety and freedom are essential for a person to live a successful life. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs discusses the five core needs that form the basis for human behavioral motivation. The second of the five core needs is safety — safety from harm, violence, and the feeling of well-being. The church must also be a safe space for the abused victim to find safety. Tamar and all victims like her need a place of safety and a place where their voices can be heard.

The Theological Foundations chapter was derived from the Social Gospel Theology espoused by Rev. Washington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbusch, and others. These preachers and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. taught that the Sermon on the Mount was Jesus' way of integrating activism into theology. These men taught that the Kingdom of Heaven was made up of all socio-economic persons, and as such, all persons deserved freedom. Advocating for the voiceless was and still is the crux of the Sermon on the Mount. Tamar and others lack individuals to advocate on their behalf. The church must step up and provide this type of ministry to heal the wounded spirit, soul, and psyche.

The Interdisciplinary Foundations chapter was derived from the Social Modeling Theory. Social Modeling represents one of the many ways that domestic abusers learn to do what they do. By observing aggressive acts, such as hitting, kicking, screaming, and

name-calling over and over again, the witness to these acts tends to do similar aggressive and reprehensible acts to another person. Generally, within the home, young boys who witness dominant male figures in their lives exhibiting these behaviors tend to imitate the observed behaviors. King David's sons were more than likely witnesses to David's sexual abuse of Bathsheba and countless other concubines. Amnon forced his half-throne from his father during his rebellion and had sex with his father's concubines (2 Samuel 16:22) in the sight of all Israel. It is said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, but in the case of King David and his sons, imitation led to corruption, death, and the breakup of the family.

Professional and Contextual Associates

The professional and contextual associates were a necessary part of my doctoral research. My professional associates gave me critical feedback on my foundational chapter writings and assisted me by using critical thinking analysis as they challenged me by repeatedly asking, "How is this foundational chapter going to support your hypothesis?" As two of the three professional associates are ordained preachers, they made certain that the research for the Biblical and Theological Foundations' chapters was doctrinally solid. My third professional associate, who is an adjunct professor of sociology at Franklin University, provided valuable input to my Interdisciplinary Foundations chapter and guided me in the writing of the Project Analysis.

My contextual associate is also the pastor of Broad Street UMC. She was instrumental in providing me with the names of the congregants to invite for this doctoral research. She also participated in the Zoom calls for the last four sessions. While she was

not an official participant, her presence was welcomed as the participants verbalized that they were excited to have her undergo the training with them. Also, it was discussed during week one that the pastor would join the Zoom for some of the sessions, and none of the participants verbalized any discomfort with her attendance on the calls.

Implementation

The project was held over a six-week timeframe on Tuesday evenings, generally from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. For session number four, the participants agreed to begin at 6:00 p.m. so that one could attend a previously scheduled appointment. The first and sixth sessions lasted less than sixty minutes, as those sessions dealt with beginning and ending administrative topics and answered questions concerning data collected during the doctoral research.

The six sessions were held via Zoom to ensure the participants' confidentiality and prevent information leaks. Therefore, it was best not to meet at the Broad Street UMC as other congregants might accidentally wander into a session. At the outset of the project, the goal was that a safe and secure environment would be provided, allowing participants to share as much as possible with the group and facilitator. The professional associates provided feedback after reading each chapter and asked salient questions about the content of each foundational chapter, as well as how to strengthen the connectivity between the chapters.

Additionally, the professional associates provided a framework for the types of questions that could elicit the desired responses. The contextual associate, the pastor, proved to be a very supportive colleague, providing feedback on the content of my

foundations' chapters and participating fully in the final project by adding validity to it simply through her presence on Zoom. During the group discussions, when questions about protocol and policy were raised, the pastor was able to answer in real-time and hear the suggestions and recommendations from the participants on the direction they thought the church should take.

The initial participants in Week One consisted of four women. The demographic from the personal interviews showed that two participants classified themselves as heterosexual, and two participants classified themselves as lesbians in a committed relationship. One participant dropped out of the final project due to her leaving the church.

Initially, the plan called for the participants to meet in person at Broad Street UMC. However, accommodations were put in place due to the sensitivity of the topic for the participants to receive the pre-project questionnaires (See Appendix C) and the reflective journal questions (See Appendix E) in unmarked envelopes to ensure anonymity. Once the participants selected an envelope, they were instructed to use the unique identifier on all documents returned to the facilitator. The Informed Consent Forms (See Appendix B) were emailed to the participants before the start of the project and emailed to the facilitator before Week One.

. The post-project questionnaire (See Appendix D) was distributed in the same way as the initial documents and was given to the participants on the Sunday before Week Six, which was the last week. During Week Five, a separate interview was conducted (see Appendix E) with each participant via telephone to gather additional material for this project. The participants were able to say as much as they desired or

could decline to answer any question. The journal responses were also collected in like manner. The participants gave me the journal entries in an unmarked envelope on the Sunday after week six. The collection of documents in the manner described above ensured that participants would remain anonymous, thereby preserving their confidentiality.

. In Weeks Two and Four, guest speakers, who were also presenters, provided additional information on domestic abuse. I had the opportunity to interview about the information presented in their talks. Weeks Two and Four contained topics that were intense concerning graphic descriptions of domestic abuse. Both guest speakers are trained social workers who would be able to diffuse and address any triggering emotions that would have surfaced during the group discussion.

The agenda for each session did not vary in the weekly presentation unless there was an addition to the agenda via a guest speaker. The guest presenters joined the Zoom call in the second and fourth weeks. It should be noted that the guest presenters were licensed social workers, and it was discussed with them that since these two specific weeks could be triggering because of the topic, they would have free rein to handle any triggering reactions as their professional training dictated.

The handouts the presenters shared via Zoom were emailed to the participants after the presentations, as they were proprietary in nature and certain information had to be redacted before disseminating. The setting for the Zoom calls was relaxed, as the participants sat comfortably within their homes. This approach was necessary as the information shared by the facilitator and the guest presenters was highly confidential, and the group discussions that took place following the lectures were of such a personal

nature that it was imperative that the participants felt safe. All of the participants stated they were in safe spaces when asked by me.

Week One

Week One started with the four participants, as the pre-project questionnaires had been given to me in unmarked envelopes on the Sunday before Week One began. The Informed Consent Forms were emailed to me before the start of Week One. My context associate was not present during Weeks One and Two but was in attendance in all the sessions following.

After Week One, one of the participants dropped out due to her moving her membership to another church closer to her home. The first week was dedicated to the participants' understanding of the presenters' and participants' roles. I discussed in depth their rights as participants and that at any time they were free to remove themselves from this study for any reason. There would be no questions asked and no retribution from me or the pastor due to their withdrawal.

The participants were told that whatever they shared within the context of this study would be anonymous. The information used would not in any way be traceable to them. It was reiterated that all data gathered would be kept in a locked storage for approximately three years. After that, the data would be destroyed in the shredder.

Once this information had been explained, the next order of business was to explain the nature of this final project and why this topic was important to the field of theology. I explained the basic layout of the next five weeks and how their contribution

would play a very important role in my research. I thanked them for volunteering to participate. The title, hypothesis, and purpose of the research were explained, as well as what topics the next five weeks would cover. I asked if there were any questions or concerns before they signed off, and all participants said they were willing to learn and contribute to this final project.

Week Two

Week Two, which was held on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, began with a lecture concerning "What is Domestic Violence —The Rape of Tamar?" This lecture introduced the Biblical Foundations' content for this final project and how this Biblical Foundations' chapter set the foundation for the domestic violence topic. I presented the following content: "Who was Tamar? Why was Tamar in this predicament? Who was responsible for administering justice for Tamar? Who was to blame for Tamar's domestic violence? Who was supportive of Tamar during this domestic violence? How did Tamar deal with the guilt and shame of being a victim of domestic violence? What were the power dynamics of Tamar's situation? Did Tamar survive this rape and live a productive life?"

I then shared my Tamar story and stressed that this was also a safe space to share their stories. Next, the guest presenter, who is a social worker with extensive experience in child welfare and adult domestic violence, shared insights into domestic violence, also now known as Intimate Partner Violence. I conducted an online interview with the guest speaker. She was asked about the nature of domestic violence. What does domestic violence look like? What are the stages of domestic violence, and how can a victim exit a domestic violence situation?

After the guest presenter answered my interview questions, she shared a presentation on domestic violence via PowerPoint. She also presented a short video of a TED Talk featuring a domestic violence survivor that reinforced our earlier sit-down interview. During the PowerPoint presentation, the guest presenter discussed the legal definition of domestic violence in Ohio as outlined in Ohio Revised Code 2919.25.[1] She explained that "domestic violence refers to physical harm caused to a family or household member or causing someone to think that they are in harm's way."[2]

The guest speaker also shared that domestic violence is on the upswing in Franklin County, noting the increase in reported cases and the number of people served by emergency shelters. She also pointed out that the impact on children was staggering. The children exhibit behavioral issues, anxiety, and even depression.[3] She next turned her attention to the Ohio Domestic Violence Network, which was a valuable resource for data and information on domestic violence. One aspect of that information is the various types of domestic violence, which can be emotional, physical, sexual, and financial, to name a few.

It can also involve controlling behaviors like using isolation techniques, monopolization of perception, induced exhaustion, threats, and degradation.[4] The main point of the TED Talk was to showcase that domestic violence is not relegated to a

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[1] Guest Presenter, "Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence," ZOOM Presentation, Week #2, February 25, 2025, Columbus, Ohio.

[2] Guest Presenter, "Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence," ZOOM Presentation, Week #2, February 25, 2025, Columbus, Ohio.

[3] Guest Presenter, "Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence," ZOOM Presentation, Week #2, February 25, 2025, Columbus, Ohio.

[4] Guest Presenter, "Domestic Violence/Intimate Partner Violence," ZOOM Presentation, Week #2, February 25, 2025, Columbus, Ohio.

particular class or socio-economic status of people. Domestic violence cuts across all cultures, races, and nationalities.

Following the presentation, a group discussion ensued, and the following questions were addressed:

- What did you already know about domestic violence, and what did you learn about domestic violence today?
- Do you think you could identify a person who is a victim of domestic violence?
- Is Tamar's story reflective of anyone in this group? If so, in what way?

After the group discussion, the participants were dismissed after acknowledging that they had their journaling questions to complete during the week. The reflective journal questions were: Thinking about Tamar and her story, what emotional trauma do victims of domestic violence exhibit? How would that impact them living their lives to the fullest? What emotional trauma have you suffered due to any type of violence being inflicted on you?

Week Three

Week Three was held on Tuesday, February 25, 2025, and began with a lecture I presented. The title was, What role did the Underground Railroad offer in providing a safe space for the runaway enslaved persons? This lesson introduced the Historical Foundations chapter for this final project and how the Underground Railroad served as a safe space in the way that victims of domestic violence need a safe space to escape their abuse. I presented the following content:

- How did the Underground Railroad serve as a sanctuary for enslaved persons escaping life-threatening situations?

- How did the Underground Railroad provide community and solidarity to the enslaved people?

- How did the Underground Railroad ensure anonymity for the escapees?

- What other social and psychological needs did the Underground Railroad provide for the escapees?

After my presentation on the Underground Railroad, a group discussion ensued as participants discussed the following questions:

- While the locations on the Underground Railroad provided safe spaces for escapees, what places in today's society provide safe spaces for victims of domestic violence?

- Would a church, mosque, or synagogue be considered places that offered safe spaces? If yes, why? If not, why not?

- How does being part of a community shape our perception of being in a safe space?

After the group discussion, the participants were dismissed after acknowledging that they had their reflective journaling questions to complete for the week. The reflective journal questions were:

- Thinking about the Underground Railroad and identifying safe spaces in today's society, how would you be encouraged to reclaim your personhood if you were a victim of domestic violence?

- How would the safe spaces enable you to regain independence from an abuser?

Week Four

Week Four was held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, and began with a lecture presented by me: The Role of the Social Gospel Movement in Expanding the Law of Love as Taught by Jesus Christ by Caring for the Least of These. This lesson introduced the Theological Foundations chapter for this final project and how the Social Gospel

ministry ushered in a period of social justice for marginalized groups, including domestic violence victims. The content included:

- What is the genesis of the Social Gospel Movement?
- Who were some of the early faith heroes of the Social Gospel Movement? What were some of their personal, theological, and social works?
- How did the Social Gospel Movement promote agape love to address the social, economic, and physical well-being of the marginalized and victims of domestic violence?
- How did the Social Gospel Movement change in the 1960s, and how is the movement relevant today for "the least of these" to include domestic violence victims?

After my presentation, I had a sit-down conversation with the guest presenter about advocacy for policy change. I asked the guest speaker, "What changes in laws and policies have benefited the disadvantaged?"

After the guest speaker's discussion and presentation, the group engaged in a discussion about:

- What are some effective advocacy strategies for domestic violence awareness?
- Do you think Broad Street UMC would be a good place to provide the resources needed for victims of domestic violence?
- Would you participate in a march to raise awareness of domestic violence?
- If you would not march, what might you do to raise awareness?

After the group discussion, the participants affirmed that they had their journal questions for the week. The journal questions were: Thinking about the use of advocacy for victims of domestic violence and the disenfranchised, what would motivate you to fight on behalf of victims of various social ills? Have you had to advocate for yourself in

any situation? If so, what was it? Were you successful? Did anyone or any group assist you?

Week Five

Week Five took place on Tuesday, March 11, 2025. I presented the lesson titled, The Case for Social Learning Theory in Effecting a Change for the Abused and Abusers of Domestic Violence. This lesson introduced the Interdisciplinary Foundations chapter for this final project and how Social Modeling, Role Modeling, and Familial Structures can positively or negatively affect domestic violence victims. The content for the lesson included the early Social Modeling studies with Bandura and what was learned by initiating modeling behaviors. What is the effect on children of imitating aggressive behaviors that they have just witnessed from a significant person in their home? What role, if any, does culture play in domestic violence? How can helping to heal the wounds of the victim and the abuser bring about transformative healing?

After the lesson, the group discussion topics included “What would a holistic plan look like if the pastoral caregivers and various sociological and psychological practitioners came together to develop a plan for healing for the victim and the abuser? Where would law enforcement enter the plan? If law enforcement has a role in the treatment plan, does that mean the healing process stops?

After the discussion, the participants affirmed that they had journal topics for the week. The questions for the journal entries were: Thinking about the Social Learning Theory, other modeling theories, and the use of pastoral help and counseling, what would be the first steps in implementing a collaborative plan to help the victims of domestic

violence? Do you think that the collaborative approach is a good way to help the victims of domestic violence while also helping the abusers?

Week Six

Week Six took place on Tuesday, March 11, 2025. Since this was the last session of the final project, no lesson was given to the participants. No group discussion was held. The participants were given time to ask questions about the previous five weeks and were asked if they had any comments or concerns regarding the study. The instructions for turning in the post-project questionnaire and the journal assignments were given — all participants were to place the documents in an unmarked envelope and present them to me the following Sunday at Broad Street UMC. I made certain that the participants received the PowerPoint presentations that the guest speakers had presented in weeks one and four. The personal interviews for the participants took place during Week Five.

Summary of Learning

This Summary of Learning examines measurable learning outcomes from the collected data and provides a reflective overview of the knowledge and/or insights gained throughout this six-week final project. The group discussions and responses to the reflective journal questions (see Appendix F) revealed that, due to the lack of teaching or preaching on this topic, there was a lack of understanding of how to support those in the Broad Street UMC who may be affected. It was championed by the participants and the pastor of Broad Street UMC that this group's work be turned into a ministry called "Listening Angels." The pastor, who was a frequent participant in this final project,

affirmed that this training would be welcomed in the ministry at Broad Street UMC. Suppose the results of this research can be applied to other churches and serve as a model for ministry. In that case, additional resources can be included in a pastor's toolkit to provide pastoral care.

Concerning the teaching and or preaching about the topic of domestic abuse, all of the participants reported they had not heard a sermon about domestic abuse, domestic violence, or intimate partner abuse. The results also pointed to the need for pastors to educate the congregation on domestic violence. As reported by the guest presenter in Week Two, the statistics report that in Franklin County, twenty-three homicides were related to domestic violence in Columbus. The Ohio Domestic Violence Network reported a 34% increase in requests for assistance from 2023 to 2024.[1] On the Zoom call of the participants, the presenter asked how many of the participants were victims of domestic abuse, and two out of three (67%) reported they had been victims of domestic violence. This statistic was mind-blowing to the presenter and will be discussed later in this chapter. Pastors would do well to heed Jesus' words to "set the captives free."

After six months of thinking about and planning my final project, I was relieved after the six weeks of lecturing, conducting group discussions, conducting sit-down interviews with the guest presenters, and collecting data. Retelling my experience of domestic violence to the participants triggered emotions of sadness. During Week Two, I told my Tamar story and was surprised that emotions swelled within me. The painful memories and the trauma of retelling that story let me know that my final project is needed. Even after sitting through counseling sessions with my pastor and resuming what I would describe as a "normal life," rearing two wonderful children, the implementation

of this final project and its effects assured me that this was a subject I was supposed to put forth. If I had any doubts before, after the six weeks of increasing awareness through training, I am certain that God was purposing for me to tell my Tamar story to help others. If society, including the church, is to get in front of this criminal behavior, then acknowledgment of being a victim is the first step to controlling this abusive behavior.

Weeks One and Six pre- and post-project questionnaire questions contained identical questions so that I could evaluate any progress in personal or intellectual growth due to the six weeks of instruction. The objective of the pre-project questionnaire was to serve as a baseline of knowledge that the participants had concerning domestic violence. The six questions asked were open-ended so that the participants could provide unfiltered responses instead of just yes or no or true or false responses. I collected four pre-project questionnaires in Week One, but by Week Six, I collected only three post-project questionnaires as a participant had opted to leave the study after Week One.

The questions asked on the pre- and post-project were identical. The questions are listed below:

1. How do you define domestic violence?
2. Are there different types of domestic violence? If yes, please identify the types of domestic violence that you know of or have knowledge of.
3. What are the signs that someone has experienced domestic violence?
4. Have you experienced domestic violence? Did you receive medical or psychological treatment?
5. What does the Bible say about domestic violence?

6. How can the ministry be improved for those currently experiencing domestic violence in their lives or those who have experienced domestic violence in their lives?

The table below provides a systematic way of recording the participants' responses for each question on the pre-project questionnaire.

Pre-project questionnaire	Participant #1	Participant #2	Participant #3	Participant #4
Question #1	Internal and External harm caused by a person in a relationship.	Violence between people living together	Physical conflict between people who live together	Harm to a person
Question #2	Yes, emotional abuse, sexual violence, and physical violence	Physical violence, emotional violence, and sexual violence	Unsure	Yes, physical, emotional, and sexual.
Question #3	Withdrawn, physical injuries, depression, controlling partner, low-esteem, anxiety	Anger, withdrawal, depression, drug use, violent behaviors toward others, obsessive behaviors, shoplifting, smoking, drinking, poor nutrition, cutting, spending money	Not often outwardly identifiable	Not sure
Question #4	No	No	No	No

Question #5	Not sure	The Bible contains stories about mistreating women, seeing them as property to be handed over to others. Also, sacrificing children is a sort of extreme domestic violence.	Mores were different back then, so I am not sure it does. Turn the other cheek?	I don't know
Question #6	Be visible to the community with the message that it is a safe haven for those experiencing domestic violence.	I think we need to name this issue in people's lives by being unafraid to talk about it. We need to express openness to those who may need to tell their stories. We need to have information ready to share about helping the victims.	I've never heard of it mentioned in a sermon. If it is mentioned, a victim might know he/she could get help from the pastor.	Just be available.

Table 1. Participants' Responses to the Pre-Project Questionnaire

Week Six — Post-Project Questionnaire

1. How do you define domestic violence?

2. Are there different types of domestic violence? If yes, please identify the types of domestic violence that you know of or have knowledge of.
3. What are the signs that someone has experienced domestic violence?
4. Have you experienced domestic violence? Did you receive medical or psychological treatment?
5. What does the Bible say about domestic violence?
6. How can the ministry be improved for those currently experiencing domestic violence in their lives or those who have experienced domestic violence in their lives?

The table below captures the responses of the participants to the questions after the six-week instruction on domestic violence/abuse.

Post-Project Questionnaire	Participant #1	Participant #2	Participant #3	Participant #4
Question #1	Violence between family members	Violence that occurs between people living in the same space together	Psychological or physical force against someone in the household	NA
Question #2	Yes, physical, emotional, financial, and sexual	Yes. Physical, psychological, sexual, and even controlling behavior (could be violent or considered psychological	Yes – physical, verbal, psychological	NA
Question #3	Physical bruises appear distant or withdrawn	Signs on the body, like a black eye, anger,	Sometimes bruising, broken bones, etc, perhaps	NA

		withdrawn behavior, a change in normal behavior for that person, over- or under-eating	withdrawal signs from social settings, friends, or family.	
Question #4	Yes, my former girlfriend verbally abused me in public	No	Yes, my husband often left me without a car or money for 15 years. No formal counseling	NA
Question #5	The story of Tamar shares how awful domestic violence is, as well as the story of David and Bathsheba, in that God punishes bad acts (the death of the baby)	The Old Testament tells stories of domestic violence (Tamar) uses fornication to personify evil, and gives strict rules for women to be subjugated to men. But the New Testament follows the actions and thoughts of Jesus, who had compassion on women, even the Samaritan woman with multiple husbands, or the woman caught in adultery.	Old Testament – it seemed okay. New Testament – Love your neighbor (others) as yourself.	NA
Question #6	The ministry should be	The ministry can bring	Certainly, in sermons, stress	NA

	available to any abused woman. Sermons should be preached about domestic violence.	these issues to the forefront, increase awareness, and extend help to those who suffer.	that it is inappropriate and how and why to get help. (abused and abuser)	

Table 2. Participants' Responses to the Post-Project Questionnaire

A comparison of the pre- and post-project questionnaire answers concluded that the participants increased their awareness of domestic violence and abuse. For question one, the responses show that the participants' definition of domestic violence now includes people living in the same household and not just between persons living together. The use of the word household could be attributed to the guest presenter discussing that domestic violence/abuse is violence against anyone living in the home, including parent-child domestic abuse or elderly abuse.

Question one showed that the participants expanded their assessment of what constituted domestic violence, as the post-project questionnaires showed that the term financial was added to the different types of domestic violence. Additionally, participant three was able to provide a correct response on the post-project questionnaire, whereas on the pre-project questionnaire, the response was "not sure." On question one, participants one and two seemed to have a good grasp of the signs that someone has experienced domestic violence, whereas participant three was now able to list some signs that someone has experienced domestic violence, where before she responded, "unsure."

Question four, "Have you experienced domestic violence?" corroborates that increasing awareness through training about domestic violence/abuse, and that this objective was met for this final project. Participants one and two changed their responses

from “no” on the pre-project questionnaire to “yes” on the post-project questionnaire. Participant three responded “no” on both pre- and post-project questionnaires. The shift in responses from “no” to “yes” substantiates that exposure to training for this subject and engaging in meaningful group discussion can cause one to reflect deeply on the question through a different lens, now shaped by increased knowledge.

On question five, participants one and three show that the Biblical Foundations’ lesson introduced them to domestic violence through the story of Tamar, so both participants showed an increase in awareness. Whereas on the pre-project questionnaire, neither were sure if the Bible said anything about domestic violence.

On question six, participants one and three’s responses showed a shift in the type of response. In the post-project questionnaire, both wrote that sermons or more sermons should be preached so the congregation could also become informed of domestic violence/abuse. Overall, the responses from the pre- and post-project questionnaires corroborate that increasing awareness through training on domestic violence/abuse can make people more aware of domestic violence and help those who are actively being trained to be able to look for signs of domestic abuse. While the pre- and post-project questionnaires were good for showing that the participants had increased their knowledge, the results did not speak to whether or not this increased knowledge would translate to being able to assist victims. The question whether increased understanding of domestic violence/abuse can give people the tools to help abused people would be answered during the personal interview question: “Do you feel confident in your ability to help victims of abuse? If not, do you think this awareness training will help you to do so?

Week Two provided multiple data points through group discussions and reflective journaling homework assignments. The group discussions were robust, with the trend of responses pointing to the fact that Broad Street UMC could help by putting signage around the church giving information about domestic violence/abuse, with numbers to call for help, and that sermons should talk about domestic violence so that the congregation can get used to hearing about it and know that there is help available.

The reflective journal questions for week two were: "Thinking about Tamar and her story, what emotional trauma do victims of domestic violence exhibit, and how would that impact them living their lives to the fullest? What emotional trauma have you suffered due to any type of violence being inflicted on you? The responses to the reflective journaling underscored the participants' ability to sympathize with Tamar and the emotional trauma that victims of domestic violence/abuse experience, and what impact it has on the victim, not being able to live life to the fullest. Two of the three participants noted that shame, guilt, and self-blame were emotions that they experienced. The participants also noted that the effects of domestic violence/abuse would be a barrier to living their life to the fullest, as the abuse would be internalized and might affect their ability to focus on work assignments or sustain meaningful relationships. One participant wrote that the Tamar story could also include sexual harassment that women face in the workforce, as that is what she faced, but did not have "the language or the gumption" to tell anyone about it.

Week Three provided multiple data points through group discussion and reflective journaling homework assignments. The group discussions showed an ongoing trend that the participants desire that Broad Street UMC be a "sanctuary church." The participants

overwhelmingly desire to help victims of domestic abuse and immigrants. During the discussion of whether or not Broad Street could be a safe space, all of the participants responded yes, not only for abuse victims but also for those who are being whisked away by ICE and deported due to their illegal immigrant status.

The reflective journaling questions were: Thinking about the Underground Railroad and identifying safe spaces in today's society, how would you be encouraged to reclaim your personhood if you were a victim of domestic violence? How would these safe spaces enable you to regain independence from an abuser?

The preponderance of responses showed that the participants think that a safe space would be the supportive community of people who have been through similar trauma, that would help rebuild self-esteem and feelings of worthiness, and provide a list of resources for mental health help and healthy ways for coping and healing. The participants also stressed that being in a community would help abuse victims learn how to trust again and re-establish independence.

The data collected from week three showed that the participants agree that Broad Street UMC should be a safe place so that abuse victims can get support. The abuse victims need assistance to lift themselves out of this tragic situation. I think the data collected from week three corroborates my hypothesis that "If leadership and laypersons of Broad Street UMC participate in domestic abuse awareness and training programs, they will be equipped to offer assistance and resources to the abused victims." Having gone through the awareness training, the participants are finding ways to help the victims by making Broad Street a sanctuary church and providing support by being available to participate in a support group.

Week Four provided data about the information given about the Social Gospel Theory/Movement and how this movement served as an advocacy platform for speaking up and actively trying to bring resources to the underserved. The group discussion honed in on the advocacy portion of the Social Gospel Movement and discussed advocating for Broad Street to be a sanctuary church to help those on whom society has turned its back. The participants discussed starting a new ministry, with the participants taking part in this final project. Their rationale was that since they have been through this awareness training for domestic violence, they could also train others in the congregation to be of help to the abused who come through the doors of Broad Street UMC. The name that the participants agreed upon was the "Listening Ears" Ministry or support group.

My contextual associate agreed this could be a viable ministry or support group and encouraged the participants to send a plan to the leadership of Broad Street. This point of establishing a ministry or support group does prove my hypothesis that "If leadership and laypersons of Broad Street UMC participate in domestic abuse awareness and training programs, they will be equipped to offer assistance and resources to the abused victims. The reflective journaling question responses showed that the participants thought deeply about their answers and connected them to the church being a viable advocacy group.

Week Five provided insightful data from the information presented during the lecture concerning Social Learning Theory. The reflective journals show that all participants had increased their critical thinking skills by being able to assess that aid for the abused victims is not one-dimensional.

Concerning the question, “Do you think that the collaborative approach is a good way to help the victim of domestic violence while also helping the abuser? The journals reflected that a collaborative approach between the church, therapists, and social agencies would help the victim to become whole. One participant wrote, “A collaborative approach is the best way for a congregation to respond to the needs of domestic abuse/violence victims. A group of people who are aware and able to help with information is more likely to make an impact in the long run.” Two participants wrote that while they are okay with offering help for the abused, they would be reluctant to help the abusers. All participants agreed that the pastor should be the first step for the abused and the abuser to get help.

Another method that I used to collect data was to conduct personal interviews to give the participants the ability to discuss anything that they might have felt uncomfortable sharing within the group setting. Also, a few of the questions served as follow-up for questions asked during the pre- and post-questionnaires and reflective journaling. The six questions in the interview are below, as well as the responses to those questions:

1. What is your sex?

2. Are you aware of anyone currently in a domestic violence situation?

3. Can you recognize the signs of domestic abuse?

4. Have you ever been a victim of domestic violence? If yes, please provide details if you can discuss it.

5. What steps or interventions do you wish that persons in your immediate community structure would have taken with you?

6. Do you feel confident in your ability to help victims of abuse? If not, do you think this awareness training will help you to do so?

Question one helped me gather demographics for the study and would be a factor for a follow-up study. I did not consider age as a relevant discriminant for this doctoral research. Question two helped me to evaluate whether the participants increased their knowledge about domestic violence. Question three helped me to evaluate whether the participants increased their knowledge about domestic violence. Question four provided a check on the veracity of question four on the pre- and post-project questionnaire and would provide more information for data collection. Question five helped me to evaluate the level of knowledge of intervention or collaborative processes of the participants. Question six helped me evaluate the effectiveness of the training in raising awareness to help victims of abuse.

Personal Interview	Participant #1	Participant #2	Participant #3
What is your sex?	Female	Female	Female
Are you aware of anyone currently in a domestic violence situation?	No	No	No
Can you recognize signs of domestic abuse?	Maybe if I look for bruising or physical abuse	If I see broken bones or handprints on the face or body.	I can see much better now.
Have you ever been a victim of domestic violence? If yes, please provide details if you can discuss it.	Yes, my former girlfriend was a bully and slapped me in front of my friends and family.	No	My husband would leave me without a car during the daytime, knowing I had to get to work. Also left me and the kids without money several times.
What steps or interventions do you wish that a	I wish that someone had stepped in and said stop to my ex-	NA	I wish I had support. No one told me I

person in your immediate community structure would have taken with you?	girlfriend. Also, I wished someone would have pulled me to the side to tell me that I did not have to endure that treatment.		didn't have to take that type of abuse.
Do you feel confident in your ability to help victims of abuse? If not, do you think this awareness training will help you to do so?	After this training, I feel more confident in listening to the person and offering a pamphlet of domestic violence resources.	I am not completely confident, but I feel more confident than when this project started. Materials and more training would help boost my confidence. I do feel confident listening to the victims and going to the pastor for further help.	I feel more confident in my ability to listen to people and to offer phone numbers for assistance.

Table 3. Participants' Responses to the Personal Interview

The responses to questions three and six showed that the awareness training did increase the participants' knowledge about domestic violence/abuse, as these responses were consistent with responses that showed greater critical thinking and expanded understanding over the six weeks. However, the most persuasive argument was that this training did increase their awareness, and they would be able to help the victims of domestic violence/abuse if the responses to question six. All participants said they would feel confident in their ability to help victims of abuse, and that this awareness training helped them to do so.

While all participants were quick to write that they were not passing themselves off as therapists, 100% said they could help by listening to the abuse stories. All wrote that they could help by being sympathetic and providing victims with a list of resources that would direct them to the proper agencies. They also wrote that they could refer the

abuse victims to the pastor if necessary. The effect of question five had a great deal of impact on two participants who had suffered domestic violence/abuse and wanted to establish the "Listening Ears" ministry because they believed that it was their duty to help other victims in the same predicament.

Week Six was spent wrapping up the final project. The participants expressed that they were thankful they were selected to be part of this final project and hoped their answers would help with my research. The participants also reiterated that they would like to see this group form the nucleus of a new ministry or support group.

Conclusion

In conclusion, after reviewing the Zoom videos of Weeks One through Six, the notes taken from the group discussions, the responses on the pre- and post-project questionnaires, the reflective journals, and the personal interviews. I collected a lot of data that helped form this analysis. In general, the participants, including my context associate, verbalized that Broad Street UMC should be positioned to be a safe space and safe place for victims of domestic violence/abuse. My initial foray into tackling this subject matter came about when I spoke to a previous pastor of Broad Street UMC. He said to his knowledge, there was no incidence of domestic violence/abuse. His response prompted me to want to introduce the congregation to the issue of domestic violence simply because the church is in the downtown area of Columbus, Ohio. The church administers an impactful Wednesday evening feeding program called "Manna Café," which feeds over 100 friends without homes every week.

Contained within that population are abusers and the abused. I have personally witnessed, at different times, an attack between intimate partners on the church grounds, and the people overseeing the program brushed the attack aside. At different times, I have witnessed Columbus Law Enforcement show up to inquire about a phone call from the dispatch unit, saying there was a possible domestic violence/abuse situation seven hours after the initial telephone call. So, while the former pastor did not know of any incidences of domestic violence/abuse within the congregation, there were incidences of domestic violence/abuse amongst the potential members who visited the Manna Café — a feeding program for the homeless in the area.

Another disturbing fact I discovered is that while I was sending out invitations for church leaders and lay leaders to be part of this doctoral research project, two individuals responded that while they would have loved to participate, they were unable to do so as they were currently in therapy for being victims of domestic violence. The conclusion I formed from all the data collected and examined was that the church must do better. The pastors and leadership of the households of faith cannot dismiss the fact that domestic violence/abuse does happen, and it is happening in their household of faith. While the church has a history of leading from behind, the church must be at the forefront and collaborate with doctors, therapists, and other social agencies to lift people out of their pain. The love of God would demand no less for God's children. God's will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

The limitations of this doctoral project surfaced as I began planning for this six-week final project. I had concerns about the number of people who would agree to participate. The small congregation is made up of older, retired Caucasian people, and I

wondered if anybody would volunteer because of possible interference with their already established lifestyle. Coming back to the church on a weeknight to attend six weeks of training might be asking too much.

As I worked with the pastor to create a list of leaders and lay leaders, most of the individuals selected did not respond to the personal invitation. Out of a group of sixteen invitations sent, I received seven responses: four responded with a "yes," and three responded with a "no." I also soon discovered that many of the retired couples traveled South for the winter months. Had I known these facts, I might have tried something differently. I am pleased to say that even with the low participation rate, the treasure trove of data provided valuable insights that proved my hypothesis.

Additionally, the topic itself served as a limitation, as the congregation was not used to this topic being socialized either from the pulpit or within the ministry groups at Broad Street. All three participants said, "This research needs to be shared with the church because no one is talking about it."

The analysis of the data shows my hypothesis was successfully validated. All participants showed an increase in awareness through training on domestic violence/abuse. The analysis also shows that all participants believed that, because of this training, they would be able to help abuse victims, albeit in a limited capacity. So, this doctoral research project was successful in what I was trying to corroborate.

Additionally, the analysis showed that this type of training to increase awareness is needed not only at Broad Street UMC but in all churches. The future implication of this study is that it should be replicated with various churches in the Columbus area to validate this study's findings. This study is needed as an addition to the body of work in

the area of domestic violence/abuse. While the data is valid for Broad Street UMC, I surmise that other researchers will be presented with similar findings. There is a need for increased awareness through training on domestic abuse.

APPENDIX A

INVITATION LETTER

Invitation Letter

Dear Interested Person,

I am Karen Lynn White, a doctoral student at the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. I am seeking volunteers to help me with my final project. This final project, which will last six weeks, is titled "Raising Awareness through Training of Domestic Abuse." This project will benefit you as a volunteer and the Broad Street UMC congregation in that it will provide awareness training for domestic abuse victims and training to the identified leaders in ways to interact with and assist domestic abuse victims. This training will equip Broad Street to be a haven where abuse victims no longer have to be silent or hide in shame.

The project will last six weeks, commencing on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, and be completed on March 25, 2025, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The project window to submit your consent form to me is from January 1 - January 31, 2025. (The consent form is attached.) I will administer this project, and all information will be held in the strictest of confidence. Any information obtained by the researcher will be carefully safeguarded and disposed of properly once the data has been mined from the collection methods. You will be asked to provide information via group discussions, pre and post-project questionnaires, focused journal writings, and personal interviews that I will conduct. At no time will any information be leaked or left unguarded.

This project will be conducted via Zoom. Please note that this project will address topics of domestic abuse that may make you feel uncomfortable or may trigger some feelings of trauma or rage. If this is the case, volunteering for this project may not be for you. Additionally, if you are currently in therapy for issues dealing with being a victim of domestic violence, then this project is not for you. I, as the researcher, do not want anyone to experience mental or psychological pain or trauma who decides to participate in this domestic abuse awareness and training project. If you begin the project and find yourself too uncomfortable, you can decline participation in future weekly training.

Your involvement will help the study of raising awareness and increasing knowledge of domestic violence. Your experiences and thoughts will help the researcher to draw robust conclusions about awareness of domestic abuse and the type of training needed to help leaders engage with abuse victims in a way that provides hope and learning.

Thank you for considering to participate in this final project.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at [redacted] or email [redacted]

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

United Theological Seminary
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Investigator Name: Karen Lynn White
Contact Information: [redacted], Cell – [redacted]

Introduction: I am a doctoral student at United Theological Seminary.

Purpose: I am conducting a study on Raising Awareness through Training of Domestic Abuse. This project will raise awareness of domestic violence within the Broad Street United Methodist Church congregation.

Requirements for Participation: You are invited because you have been identified as a leader at Broad Street United Methodist Church and over the age of 18 years.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to: 1. Consent to be a voluntary participant in the study that will be conducted via Zoom; 2. Commit to at least two hours per week in pursuit of training; 3. Be willing to participate in group discussions; 4. Be willing to take pre- and post-test questionnaires; 5. Be willing to be questioned by the researcher via a private online interview method; 6. Be willing to write in a journal your responses to questions regarding the topic discussed during the weekly training. No data collected by the researcher will be traceable to you. Information will be held in the strictest of confidence. The consent form will be emailed to you at least 4 weeks in advance of the final project. You may opt out at any time.

Human Subject Participation:
All the participants must have consented to be in the study, and participants must be protected and treated fairly throughout the study. For example, children who are under 18 years old must have permission from their parents/ guardians. For women who are pregnant or may become pregnant during the study, they must provide a doctor's note for their safety since they are considered a protected class (i.e., vulnerable population) by the Federal Law.

Risks: As this training will deal with sensitive information, some participants may be uncomfortable with the graphic nature of domestic violence, as may be told through stories or group discussions. Additionally, some participants may feel trauma associated with some topics, as they may have previously experienced abuse. In the event of accidental data disclosure, there may be legal, financial, social, or personal implications. In addition, I, the researcher, will abide by my state's mandatory reporting laws.

Benefits: The expected benefits for participants are to gain awareness of domestic abuse culture and get training to be able to identify and help abused victims who may come through the door of Broad Street UMC or those who are members. The expected benefits for Broad Street UMC would be recognition of being a safe space for domestic abuse

victims. The expected benefits for society would be that Broad Street UMC would be a voice for the voiceless, abused victims, and Broad Street UMC would be a beacon of hope for people needing assistance in domestic abuse.

Voluntariness: Participation is voluntary, and you may skip any questions you do not wish to answer. You can also stop participating at any time. Your decision to participate will have no impact on your membership at Broad Street United Methodist Church. If something makes you feel uncomfortable in any way while you are in the study, please contact me directly in person, on the phone, or in electronic communication. My contact information is at the top of this consent form. You can refuse to respond to any or all of the questions, and you will be able to withdraw from the process at any time.

Confidentiality:
We will be careful to keep your information confidential, and we will ask you and all the focus group members to keep the discussion confidential as well. There is always a small risk of unwanted or accidental disclosure. The conversations and the focus groups will be recorded and transcribed only with your permission. Any notes, recordings, or transcriptions will be kept private. I will be the only one with access to your information. The files will be encrypted and password-protected. You can decide whether or not you want your name used.

Summary: If you have any questions about the research study, please contact me.

Signature: Signing this paper means that you have read this or had it read to you, and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not sign the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and no one will be mad if you do not sign this paper or even if you change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done, and what to do.

Signature of Person Agreeing to Participate in the Project/Study	Date Signed

APPENDIX C

PRE-PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

Pre-Project Questionnaire

1. How do you define domestic violence?
2. Are there different types of domestic violence? If yes, please identify the types of domestic violence that you know of or have knowledge of.
3. What are the signs that someone has experienced domestic violence?
4. Have you experienced domestic violence? Did you receive medical or psychological treatment?
5. What does the Bible say about domestic violence?
6. How can the ministry be improved for those currently experiencing domestic violence in their lives or those who have experienced domestic violence in their lives?

APPENDIX D

POST-PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

[1]

[1]

Post-Project Questionnaire

1. How do you define domestic violence?
2. Are there different types of domestic violence? If yes, please identify the types of domestic violence that you know of or have knowledge of.
3. What are the signs that someone has experienced domestic violence?
4. Have you experienced domestic violence? Did you receive medical or psychological treatment?
5. What does the Bible say about domestic violence?
6. How can the ministry be improved for those currently experiencing domestic violence in their lives or those who have experienced domestic violence in their lives?

APPENDIX E

PERSONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Personal Interview Questions

1. What is your sex?

2. Are you aware of anyone currently in a domestic abuse situation?

3. Can you recognize the signs of domestic violence?

4. Have you ever been a victim of domestic abuse? If yes, please provide details if you can discuss it.

5. What steps or interventions do you wish that persons in your immediate community structure would have taken with you?

6. Do you feel confident in your ability to help victims of abuse? If not, do you think this awareness training will help you to do so?

APPENDIX F

REFLECTIVE JOURNALING QUESTIONS

Reflective Journaling Questions

Home Journaling for Tamar's Story – Week #2

1. Thinking about Tamar and her story, what emotional trauma do victims of domestic violence exhibit, and how would that impact them living their lives to the fullest?

2. What emotional trauma have you suffered due to any type of violence being inflicted on you?

Home Journaling – Underground Railroad – Week #3

1. Thinking about the Underground Railroad and identifying safe spaces in today's society, how would you be encouraged to reclaim your personhood if you were a victim of domestic violence?

2. How would these safe spaces enable you to regain independence from an abuser?

Home Journaling – Social Learning Theory- Week #4

1. Thinking about the use of advocacy for victims of domestic violence and the disenfranchised, what would motivate you to fight on behalf of victims of various social ills?

2. Have you had to advocate for yourself in any situation? If so, what was it? Were you successful? Did anyone or group assist you?

Home Journaling – Social Learning Theory- Week #5

1. Thinking about the Social Learning Theory, other modeling theories, and the use of a pastor's help and counseling, what would be the first steps in implementing a collaborative plan to help the victims of domestic violence?

2. Do you think that the collaborative approach is a good way to help the victim of domestic violence while also helping the abuser?

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